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Canonization Issue

St. Joseph's of Indiana



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# Measure

## *Canonization Issue*

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# Editorial

No one at St. Joseph's College experienced the canonization of Saint Gaspar without experiencing an inner change. Everyone, from the painters to the President, from the cooks to the coaches, was affected by the raising of the new saint, because all are a part of what that saint had begun a century ago. Through his work, Gaspar del Bufalo is just as alive in 1954 as he was when he lived in the last century.

His influence is just as galvanic as when he lifted his missionary cross in the hills of Sonnino in Italy. His words ring today as they did in the church at Perugia. His devotion to the Most Precious Blood is as fervent as when he elevated his chalice in daily sacrifice. Thus with Gaspar's canonization are perpetuated both his name and his work forever in the Church.

Because of the sacredness of the occasion, we at Collegeville and more in particular, we of the staff of **Measure**, face the problem of adequately commemorating the event. Our sole means is literary, and in our literary magazine we can offer a heart-tingling account of the external side of the glorious occasion, a soul-stirring meditation on the internal process of canonization, and even words of inspiration and instruction from the saint himself. In addition, however, we can offer a bit of tribute to one of God's great.

To be sure, even the sound of the word "canonization" is thrilling; it carries with it the peal of the silver trumpets hidden high in the recesses of Saint Peter's as well as the almost audible echo of the incomparable heavenly choirs. It contrasts earthly pomp and veneration with the realization of greater majesty, a supernatural goal achieved.

Here, then, is our attempt to paint a tangible portrait of the intangible.

J.B.

# Canonization Ceremonies of St. Gaspar del Bufalo

By  
Donald Dirksen

St. Peter's Square is alive with anticipation. The tops of the colonnades are black with people. Over the loud-speakers come brief biographies of five "canonizandi." A boarded aisle winds from the Bronze Door in the colonnade to the Papal Throne, set up on the steps and facade of St. Peter's. As the awaited papal retinue approaches, the Sistine Choir sings anthems to the Blessed Virgin, the Credo, and the Litany of the Saints. For the third time in Pius XII's pontificate St. Peter's Square is the scene of the solemn ceremonies of canonization.

At 5:40 the solemn procession suddenly begins, led by the religious orders and secular clergy of Rome. All are chanting the Litany of the Saints. Close behind are huge colorful banners depicting miracles and activities in the new saints' lives. The endless procession of clergy, dignitaries, and officials moves slowly toward St. Peter's.

The Holy Father now leaves his private rooms for the vesting hall, where the Cardinals await him. Wearing the tiara, the Holy Father, followed by the Cardinals, proceeds to the Sistine Chapel. After a short prayer His Holiness intones the "Ave

Maris Stella." At the end of the first verse His Eminence Gaetano Cardinal Cicognani, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Rites and Procurator of Canonization Causes, approaches the Sovereign Vicar with three lighted candles. His Holiness accepts one. The Archbishops and bishops join the papal cortege. Donning the mitre, the Pope proceeds to the Bronze Door on his *sedia gestatoria*. At 6:15 he makes his appearance.

Through a wild sea of cheering come the intermittent sounds of trumpets playing the triumphal march. The Sistine Choir under the direction of Monsignor Lorenzo Perosi can be heard singing the "Ecce Sacerdos Magnus." The irrepressible waves of hand-clapping are overwhelming. "Viva il Papa" comes from everywhere. 200,000 faithful bear witness to their love and loyalty for the Vicar of Jesus Christ. The Holy Father's right hand moves from side to side in blessing as the papal cortege, led, by the Swiss Guards, files up the aisle toward the steps of St. Peter's. The "flabelli" of rich ostrich plumes wave overhead.

The Cardinals now come one by

one to the throne to make their obeisance to His Holiness while the Sistine Choir swells into "Tu es Petrus." Cardinal Cicognani and Dr. Camillo Corsanego, a consistorial advocate, come forward with a papal master of ceremonies to the foot of the throne. The Cardinal Procurator stands as the consistorial advocate kneels and in the Procurator's name beseeches the Holy Father three times "instante, instantius, et instantissime" (earnestly, more earnestly, and most earnestly) to proceed to the canonization. The Vicar himself remains silent. Speaking for the Pope, Monsignor Antonio Bacci replies that His Holiness is disposed to proceed to the solemn act. At the suggestion of Cardinal Nicola Canali, Deacon of Honor, the Pontiff joins all in a last prayer invoking the Holy Spirit, and then intones the "Veni, Creator Spiritus." Rising from his knees, he sings the oration, and a prelate secretary announces that the Sovereign Pontiff will now proceed to the canonization.

Wearing the mitre and sitting on the Chair of St. Peter, Pope Pius XII in the fulness of his power solemnly declares: "In honor of the Holy and Indivisible Trinity, for the exaltation of the Catholic faith and the increase of the Catholic religion, by the authority of Our Lord Jesus Christ, of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and by Our own; after mature deliberation, ever imploring the Divine Assistance, by the advice of our Venerable Brethren, the Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, the Patriarchs, Archbishops, and

Bishops present in the Eternal City, We decree and define as a Saint, and We inscribe in the catalogue of Saints the Blessed Peter Louis Chanel, martyr, Gaspar del Bufalo, Giuseppe Maria Pignatelli, and Dominic Savio, confessors, and Maria Crocifissa di Rosa, virgin, ordaining that their memory be celebrated with devotion every year in the Universal Church."

The veil then drops from the picture above the throne showing the five new saints in their celestial triumph. The cheering and clapping is deafening.

At last the Consistorial Advocate again comes forward to thank His Holiness and asks that he order the publication of the official documents of canonization. The Pope agrees and replies, "We so decree."

After extolling the new saints in Italian the Pontiff removes the mitre and intones the "Te Deum." The whole square echoes in praise and thanksgiving to God. After a brief invocation by Cardinal Nicola Canali the Holy Father sings for the first time an oration in honor of the new saints. Again there is cheering as the long procession makes its way through the crowd. Deafening tribute greets the Holy Father as the papal cortege, flanked by the Swiss Guards, moves through the throng. Minutes later the Holy Father appears at the window in his Vatican study. His hand traces a large cross over the crowd, and from the loud-speakers can be heard the words of his Apostolic Blessing.

## Sunday Morning Mass

The following day, Trinity Sunday morning, St. Peter's fills to capacity. People are standing everywhere. There are neither pews nor benches. Only one passageway is left in the center. The statue of St. Peter is decorated with the tiara, the jeweled ring, and crimson cope of state. The pillars of the basilica are draped with scarlet damask and crimson flemish tapestries. Crystal candelabra line all the columns. Flood lights and hundreds of chandeliers with thousands of bulbs supply a blaze more brilliant than the light of day. High on the transept walls hang painted tableaux of the new saints. Spotlights bring into relief the moldings and gilded decorations of the ceiling.

Beneath the glittering dome of Michelangelo is the elevated Pontifical Altar, facing the front of St. Peter's. Directly in front of the altar is the decorated entrance to the crypt of Saint Peter. Four huge columns support the altar's canopy. Near the candles on the gospel side stands His Holiness's jeweled tiara. The "ministri" of the mass, Cardinal Eugenio Tisserant, Celebrant and Dean of the Sacred College, and Monsignori Fontenelle and Hemmick, Canons of St. Peter's and deacon and subdeacon, are awaiting the Holy Father.

At the stroke of ten the Holy Father appears, borne aloft on the *sedia gestatoria*. The applause and cheering seems even louder as it reverberates from wall to wall in

the basilica. The Holy Father is moving slowly through the excited throng. Each time he turns from side to side for his blessing a new round of applause and "Viva's" rend the air. At the altar the Pope alights and takes his place next to the Cardinal Celebrant for the prayers at the foot of the altar. After the "confiteor" he walks between the long lines of Cardinals and bishops to his throne in the apse of the basilica. The Sistine Choir is singing the Kyrie from Palestrina's *Missa Papae Marcelli*. The mass is as usual except that with the collect of Trinity Sunday is inserted a prayer to the new saints. After the Credo comes the impressive offertory procession to the Holy Father with the traditional symbolic offerings. These are solemnly offered to the Holy Father: five large candles, decorated in honor of the new saint, two loaves of bread, gilded and silvered barrels of wine and water, two silver cages, each with a pair of turtle doves and pigeons, and a gold cage with four bright canaries. Cardinals Fossati, Micaro, and Ottaviani accompany the procession of Saint Gaspar to the throne, where the numerous relatives of St. Gaspar sit on benches near the Holy Father. After singing Perosi's own "Oremus Pro Pontifice" during the offertory procession, the Sistine Choir, at the special request of the Holy Father sings Mendelssohn's "Beati omnes qui timent Dominum."

The solemn moment of consecration is near. The Pope is on his knees at the papal throne. The Noble

Guard, swords drawn and down, genuflects before the altar of the Most High. From the dome the silver trumpets reverently play the triumphal march. Then come the sacred words of consecration.

After the communion of the Mass

the Holy Father gives his Apostolic Blessing. Again the devoted throng bursts out with "Viva il Papa." The overwhelming noise echoes from everywhere. The papal procession moves slowly away through the sea of waving handkerchiefs.

## *Examination of official Steps to Canonization*

By  
Edgar D. Jutte

Beatification and canonization have been a part of the Church since early Christian times. During the Roman persecution all martyrs and persons who lived the life of suffering equal to a martyr were considered to be in heaven. The names of these martyrs were put on the **diptychs** or lists and read at Mass. A shortened list of them is still used in the missal, immediately following the Sanctus at the Canon of the Mass. These list the Church's earliest canonized saints, for originally canonization meant to place the name of the saint in the Canon of the Mass. This still occurs today on a day of canonization, when the new saint's name is put in this list of that Solemn Mass.

The distinction between beatification and canonization is a definite one. The former permits local wor-

ship, in that the laity of a particular religious community may give honor to the person beatified. Canonization, on the other hand, extends this permission to the universal Church.

It was not until the fourth century that non-martyrs were included in the Canon of the Mass. Saint Isidore writes, "There are two classes of martyrs (witnesses), one in open suffering and the other in the secret virtue of the soul."

Among the latest martyrs of blood is Saint Louis Chanel, canonized last June twelfth. The earliest martyrs of the "secret virtue of the soul" are the hermits of the desert as well as Saint Martin of Tours. The latest were four that were canonized in June and which included Saint Gaspar del Bufalo.

Until the twelfth century any bishop could beatify a martyr or con-

fessor, but only the Bishop of Rome could canonize. Because of abuses that crept in over several centuries, the bishops saw fit to relinquish their authority to the Bishop of Rome. When Urban VIII was pope, he established in the year 1634 a procedure that was much the same as the one used now; but some modifications were made in 1918 by Pope Benedict XV in his new Code of Canon Law. Urban VIII ordered that henceforth no public honor could be allowed to any one who had not been beatified by the Pope. Persons excepted were those honored from ancient times, such as the Jewish prophets and martyrs.

To get to heaven is difficult, to practice virtue in an heroic degree is more difficult, but to practice it so well that a battery of judges consider in worthy of veneration at the altar is by far the most difficult.

Most people are becoming more and more aware of canonizations because so many have taken place within the last several generations. The greatest number during one pontificate was twenty-three, during the reign of Pius XI. Such canonizations are the results of much judicial procedure, which is usually diuturnal and uncompromising.

For example, this beatification-canonization process for Saint John Fisher extended over a three hundred year period, while on the other hand, it lasted less than forty years for Saints Louis King of France, Therese of Lisieux, and Mother Francis Cabrini. For Saint Gaspar

del Bufalo the period was a hundred and eighteen years.

This process has four parts, all to be completed in the following order: the informative process, the introduction of the cause, the apostolic process, and a series of four judgments.

One probably wonders who institutes this entire affair. If the Servant of God was a religious in a cloister, and the laity know nothing about him, his religious confreres will initiate the cause. Any member of the laity in good repute can petition a bishop to start a cause to inquire into the sanctity of a friend. After this, the local bishop of the diocese decides whether the time is ripe for the investigation. This investigation must begin within thirty years of the person's death, for after that length of time most of the contemporary witnesses are dead and evidence is difficult to obtain. If the inquiry hasn't begun within that time, the Bishop must give sufficient reasons for delay to the Holy See.

The informative process is handled by an ecclesiastical fact-finding committee of the diocese in which the person died or performed miracles. The Promoter of the Faith, or the "Devil's Advocate", is a member of the diocesan clergy who sees to it that the Church's good name is safeguarded from fraud and deceit. His sole aim is to discover all the truths, both good and bad, about the person. Witnesses summoned are examined by him to make sure that they testify to fact only and not to pious

stories. The five judges are all clerics, preferably Doctors of Theology or Canon Law.

As the name of this part indicates, only information is gathered and decision of the sanctity of the Servant of God is not given. After this data has been gathered, two copies of it are made in longhand. One of these is sealed and sent to Rome; the other stays in the diocesan archives and is so sacrosanct that it may not be opened without explicit permission of the Holy See.

The second phase of this process is the **de scriptis**. All the writings of the Servant of God are gathered and sent with the above data to the Holy See. The "Devil's Advocate" starts collecting writings of any kind as soon as he is appointed. Sermons, diaries, autobiographical writings, notes, books, cards, whether handwritten or dictated all must be investigated.

One of the complications that slowed Saint Alfonsus de Liguori's canonization was the fact that he complimented Voltaire for his return to the Church, even though Voltaire subsequently fell away from the Church again. Saint Alfonsus felt justified in doing this, because they both had been companions in their First Holy Communion class and were in the same class in the seminary.

The third phase of this process is the **non-cultus** decision. Here is proved that no premature public veneration as a saint has occurred. Letters and prayers of such devotion,

if there be any, are collected by the Promoter of the Faith. Prayer leaflets for beatification and miracles are permitted, however. It may be noted here that this is the only decision made by the diocesan tribunal, decisions on the virtue or writings being reserved by the Holy See. If the decision is **cultus**, i.e. "worship", further investigation is needed.

At this point we come to the second major part, in which the introduction of the cause is begun. In this section the Pope approves of what the local Bishop presented after much judicial procedure of the Sacred Congregation.

Here the first step is a re-examination of the person's writings. An official commission of Doctors of Theology examine them for purity of faith and morals. The identity of the examiners is kept secret, and each gives separate reports. For martyrs it has to be proved that the person in question died for the true faith and not for some heresy as many sixteenth century "reformers" did. If the amount of writing is voluminous as was the case for Saints Robert Bellarmine and Alfonsus Liguori, the task will be given to a number of theologians instead of two.

If nothing is found contrary to faith or morals in the writings, the reports of the earlier process concerning sanctity and miracles are considered. In some cases the minutes from such sessions of the Sacred Congregation on the heroic virtue

become long. For Saint Therese of Lisieux, the mass of testimony amounted to three-thousand pages of close longhand, all of which was the result of a hundred and nine sessions, each averaging about five hours. If the Cardinals now feel that the cause is worthy of being officially opened in Rome, their recommendation is presented to the Holy Father. If the Pope should approve, the third part follows.

Before this, though, the Sacred Congregation reviews the **non-cultus** decision of the diocesan tribunals. Though the Congregation reaches no formal decision, its approval has to be secured before further progress is made.

A third part, the apostolic process, is much the same as the first except that this one is on a higher level. From this time, even though the sessions might be held in the diocese of the Servant of God, they are apostolic processes because they are held by the authority of the Holy See. Seven ecclesiastics, including two sub-Promoters of the Faith, are officers of the Holy Father. The local Bishop is usually one of the judges. At least three of the judges and one of the sub-promoters must be present at all sessions. The Bishop still has to lend his full support to these sessions, by giving information, even though such sessions are no longer by his authority.

Here are begun more studies concerning the reputation and general fame for sanctity and the report of miracles and martyrdom. If these

topics were covered sufficiently in the informative process, they are omitted at this stage. Following this the body is usually exhumed and minutely examined.

All competent witnesses are summoned who had any acquaintance with the Servant of God or his miracles. Even a heretic's testimony is recorded if it is reliable. Excluded witnesses are the confessors of the Servant of God and all the officials of the beginning stages. This Apostolic Process is a secondary fact-finding committee.

The evidence gathered by these sessions is usually great. For example the report for Saint Therese was a twenty-five hundred page document. The last part of the series is four judgements, all prerequisites for the formal beatification ceremony is reached.

The first judgement decides the validity of the previous process and the transcribed minutes. For deciding this the Postulator of the Cause firsts makes a "positio", after which the "Devil's Advocate" presents his objections, and finally the Postulator states his replies. When the Sacred Congregation is satisfied, the way is opened for the second judgement.

Heroicity of virtue or the fact of martyrdom is decided upon at this point. When things have advanced this far Canon Law prescribes a "fifty year rule" unless it is dispensed with. This means that this judgement cannot take place within fifty years of the death of the Servant of God. Mother Francis

Cabrini was exempted from this regulation.

This judgement is *sine qua non* for the beatification investigation. It is concerned not with the report of sanctity, but proves that the Servant of God practiced heroically the virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity, and the moral virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance. In the case of martyrs, both the cause of martyrdom and the intentions of the executioners must be ascertained before the final judgement.

These separate sessions are prescribed for this step of the process. The first or ante-preparatory session once again examines the digests of the evidence given in the Apostolic Process and the introduction of the cause. The second or preparatory session is held by all the Cardinals of the Sacred Congregation of Rites. Once more the question is asked and answered whether the theological and moral virtues were practiced by the person concerned.

The final and general session meets in the Vatican Palace in the presence of the Holy Father. A vote is taken concerning the heroicity of virtue. This vote is only consultive, and the final decision is left to the Holy Father. If the Cardinals' vote is negative the cause is closed. If the vote is positive the Pope usually waits a few weeks after deliberation and prayer before he gives his final decision. Henceforth the Servant of God may be called "Venerable", but no public cultus is allowed even now.

The third judgement deals with

the miracles ascribed to the Venerable. Again three congregations, as for the decision on virtue, is necessary. Two miracles of curing are sufficient for beatification if they can be proved by eye witnesses, but three or four are required if the evidence is second-hand. In addition, two physicians, surgeons, or specialists are necessary to testify in the first two sessions, one being insufficient. These doctors have to testify that there was a complete cure which cannot be explained by natural means. Cures of epilepsy are rejected, for it is hard to prove that the disease will not recur. If both doctors agree in rejecting a miracle, that one will be considered no further. In the general session as before, only a consultive vote is taken and the final judgement is left to the Holy Father.

A fourth and final decision is now reached. This judgement is called "**de Tuto**". The question is, "Is it safe to proceed to the beatification of the Servant of God?" A new session is again convened. After this doubt is voted upon, a recommendation is sent to the Holy Father. As a rule the Pope usually waits until Sunday or a feast day to announce his favorable decision.

Following this the beatification ceremony takes place at Saint Peter's in Rome. The procedure for canonization is now in order. For this zenith to be reached there is needed two post-beatification miracles. Now again these new miracles have to be discussed in three sessions of the Sacred Congregation of Rites. For

Saint Gaspar del Bufalo, an incident that happened in 1947 would not be approved as a miracle because some of the doctors, though not all on the medical commission, did not exclude hypochondria from the very start. Still a better one had to be found, and one performed in 1929 took its place. Another "**de Tuto**" judgement in regards to canonization is given here. If everything has gone well the Holy Father, after imploring the

Holy Spirit, arranges the day of solemn canonization.

The expenditures and the finances of a proceeding such at this are expensive. Notaries, advocates, and doctors, have to be paid, witnesses guaranteed against loss, and documents have to be printed. Each one varies, but the overall expense is great even when it is shared by more than one group as was the case last June twelfth.

# A Century Ago in Sonnino

By  
Donald Ranly

The tavern was dead that night in the fall of 1821. The people in the vicinity of Sonnino had spent a full day. Only three men besides Guiseppi, the bartender, lingered over the smell of Italian wine and speckled cubes of dice. Guiseppi wished they would leave, not only because he was eager to spread his aching bones on his feather bed, but more because he didn't trust these three customers. Their appearance was certainly not respectable, and they had been drinking and gambling a little too long to please him.

The fat one laughed boisterously now. He was happy tonight—he was winning. Except for an occasional swear word on the lips of the youth, the only noise singing through the tavern out into the empty streets was the jubilation of the fat one. He sat with his feet wound tightly around the front legs of his sagging chair, eager and alert. Squinting his eyes over the smoke that rose jaggedly from his twisted, chewed cigar, he occasionally brushed his long, neglected hair as he rolled his only income. His eyes, gleaming with victory and wine seemed to pierce the very center of the dice and hypnotize them into turning over his number. Tonight even when he lost he threw his money down gleefully.

"Wine, more wine!" the fat one screamed with a booming voice possible only from a man of his size. Guiseppi looked askance at the three. As if hoping he would hear the order canceled, he walked slowly to the shelf and carefully chose a weak brand. He looked again at his guests, slowly opened the bottle, and cautiously approached the corner table.

"Come now, Seppi, is the wine that heavy, or are you that heavy with it?" the fat one quipped. Pleased with his joke, he nearly rolled his huge bulk off the chair in his laughter. This set the silent one to laughing and even the youth smiled, perhaps bitterly.

With a newly filled glass the silent one settled into his usual position, his back not touching the chair, his head resting lazily and heavily upon his left hand. He seldom lifted his head, even to drink. His silence tonight was not unusual. The oldest of the three, he seldom disagreed with the other two, even if it meant death to a stubborn market woman who refused to hand over her earnings for the day. A huge circular scar showed on his right temple, a constant reminder of the day his wife, thoroughly angry at his shiftlessness, drove him out of the house with a barrage of furniture, and

swore she would kill him if he ever returned. The silent one had never thought of returning to her, not because he feared her threat, but because this looser life was cut out for him. With money in his pocket, and a bottle of wine he had never been happier.

The youth slouched himself even deeper into his chair. He was not himself tonight. Usually he kept up with the fat one with his constant chatter. Everything was going wrong. He dared not feel deep into his pockets for fear that he would find nothing there. He wanted to quit, of course, but fear of what the fat one would say kept him rolling on. Although he would be the last one to admit it, the youth was tired, and more than a little tipsy from the wine. Under more normal circumstances, a glance at him would reveal a strong body with a singularly handsome face. As the fat one had put it when the youth had sought admission into the tiny band some months before, "You're all right, kid. You look tough, but no one would ever suspect a baby face like yours." He remembered well the day he had run away from home. His father wished him to be a shoemaker like himself, but the life of a bandit sounded more exciting to a youth of nineteen. At first he was completely happy and contented with his vocation, but recently, something had happened to set his mind thinking. However, he hated to dwell on the incident as much as he hated thinking of his mother with all her crazy ideas about religion.

Guisseppi yawned and looked up at the big clock across from the bar. Quarter past eleven. He usually closed much before this. He shrank from the idea of telling the three to leave. He knew that the wine had brought them to a stage where anything could happen. They would probably refuse anyway, and there certainly was no possibility of using force. Guisseppi wondered if his wife were worried. She ordinarily sat up until he arrived home. The night was clear and refreshing. That's what he needed, he thought, some fresh air, and while he was outside, he might as well walk down the street and explain to his wife. He considered the three. He realized that they had no intention of leaving. He concluded also that none of them looked energetic enough at the present time to cause any damage. Having checked to see that the glasses on the corner table were sufficiently filled with wine, he made sure that he left no money, and slipped quietly out the back door, hoping that his twenty minute absence would not be noticed.

Shortly after Guisseppi's departure, the silent one suddenly stood up. He jammed both his hands into his pockets and then brought them out, turning the pockets inside-out. "That's all. I quit." His eyes met the fat one's in a cold stare. There would be no opposition; his statement was final.

Yet, tonight the fat one was more flushed than usual with wine and money. "You're a sly one all right. How about your back pockets?" he laughed chidingly.

"I said I quit."

Before the fat one could get in another word, the youth arose. "Likewise," he said.

"What?" the fat one thundered incredulously.

"You heard what I said, I quit."

The fat one laughed loud and long, smashing what remained of his cigar into an already full ash tray. "Come now, kid," he said. "This is not like you. The night is young."

The youth knew this would be difficult. He pulled out a chair from another table and sat facing the back of it, his head resting on both hands. The silent one had retreated to the far corner, hoping to sleep while the inevitable battle between the two would rage.

"Your luck's likely to change!" the fat one continued, "you can be back on top in no time."

"You're crazy. You know I couldn't win back what I've lost to-night in a week of lucky nights."

"Look kid, I'll cut down the betting to half. You'll have plenty of chance. What do you say?"

"I say I'm through, finished."

The fat one grew more serious. He changed his position and his tactics. He was winning and he wanted to go on winning. The youth might persist in his stubbornness. There was only one way to handle this now. "You're getting soft, kid. Maybe I had you figured wrong in the first place."

The youth started. "Watch what you say."

"That-a-boy. At least I've found that you can still act tough."

"What do you mean?"

The fat one went farther, farther than he had intended to go. "I mean that ever since you heard that fool priest, you've—

"That's not true!" Both fell silent, but the youth's mind worked rapidly. So even this stupid fat friend of his had noticed. That priest! That priest! It had been two weeks since he had heard him. The three had been about to enter a tavern when the youth, curious at the sight of a crowd, left his partners and came to see the attraction. As he approached, he heard a piercing, magnetic voice. "Repent sinners, repent! Jesus Christ has redeemed you by the shedding of His Most Precious Blood." The youth had stopped, had wanted to run away from the thought of religion, but that voice—what must the man be? He had edged through the outside lines of the crowd. Suddenly, he saw a man, dressed in a cassock with a cross and chain hanging over his breast and another larger crucifix in his hands. The words flowed from his mouth magnificently—words so simple a child could understand; yet, they dwelt on the most profound subject possible. The youth had turned to an old woman at his side and asked in a frightened whisper who the priest was. The woman had looked up, surprised, and in a reproachful tone asked, "Don't you know Fr. del Bufalo?"

It was after this that the two had found him there. Oh, the folly of it all! It was only with repeated curses and threats that he had been able to suppress them. Tonight was the first

time in days that the fat one had dared to refer to it. The truth hurt and the fat one had hit upon it. He was getting soft, and only the priest was the cause of it.

"Wine! More wine!" the fat one called.

The three turned toward the bar.

"Where's that fool bartender?"

"Probably gone out to get some fresh air. Can't say that I blame him," the silent one said.

The fat one swore. Then his eyes searched the place thoroughly. "Well, if nobody's around, we might as well talk business. Tomorrow we go to work."

"Not tomorrow," the youth said firmly.

"I said tomorrow we go to work."

"I said not tomorrow," aloud, and then to himself, "That priest, that priest, I can't, I—"

"Why not? What's the matter, kid, you scared?"

"No, no, I'm not scared, only—"

The fat one's temper was about to flare. First the dice affair and then this. "Tomorrow we go to work."

"No!"

The fat one was on his feet. From

his hip came the polished blade of a long knife. In a mad plunge he lunged at the youth. The youth jumped to his feet, grabbed the down-coming arm of the fat one, but was unable to stop the crush of the blow. The knife fell deep into his throat and remained there as his body fell quivering to the floor.

The silent one approached calmly.

"Now what?" he asked.

"We'd better get out of here!"

"And leave the body here?"

"We haven't time." The two scampered out of the door and were never seen again in Sonnino.

Guiseppe came in the back door just as he had departed. His eyes traveled to the corner table. "Thank God, they're gone," he breathed. He walked around the bar to lock the front door and blew out the two lamps on the wall. Then he blew out the final lamp behind the bar and stepped outside. As he locked the door and began his walk home to an understanding wife, he was hoping that these three would stay out of trouble—especially that youth. Such a fine young man he looked to be, this youth.

# *Four Saints Elevated To Altar With Gaspar*

By  
Gerard Schmidt

The varied assortment of new saints, a boy, a woman, and three men, all of whom died within the 19th century, offer an inspiration to people of all walks of life. The story of their lives is one of diverse details and circumstances, yet the theme remains constant. Directed by Divine grace, they honored God by attaining personal sanctification, each in his own way.

The new saints who were recently canonized with Gaspar del Bufalo by Pope Pius XII are Dominic Savio, Italian pupil of St. John Bosco; Maria Crocifissa di Rosa, wealthy young woman who left the factory she managed to found the Congregation of the Handmaids of Charity; Peter Chanel, French priest who gave his life for Christ on the Pacific Island of Fortuna; and Giuseppe Maria Pignatelli, a Spanish Jesuit of marked importance in a most turbulent era of the Society of Jesus.

Besides their heroic virtue, there emerges from this diversity yet another bond common to all four of the new saints—a childlike devotion to the Mother of God. Before leaving for Fortuna, Peter Chanel had pictures of Mary with a brief prayer of petition on the opposite side, printed

and distributed among the people. Dominic Savio, being asked in a vision of Don Bosco what gave him the most satisfaction at the hour of death, answered: "It was the help of the lovable Mother of God. Tell your boys that." Striking accounts of loving fidelity to Mary can be sighted in the lives of these servants of God.

Dominic Savio, 1842-57, the model for boys, was born in the rustic village of Riva di Chieri in northern Italy. As the son of a blacksmith he spent many hours working at the forge in his early boyhood. On the day of his first Communion the seven year old took for himself the self-composed motto, "Death Rather than Sin." At the age of twelve he met Don Bosco who was to lead him to towering heights of sanctity. He died of pneumonia, having lived a "full life" in fifteen years.

Maria Crocifissa di Rosa, 1815-55, born of wealthy but pious parents at Brecia, entered the convent school of the Sisters of Visitation to receive her early training. However, at the early age of seventeen she left the convent to manage her father's silk factory, caring for both the material and spiritual welfare of her work-

ers. By her heroic work in the cholera epidemic of 1836, she planted the seeds from which blossomed the Congregation of the Handmaids of Charity. Noble birth and riches, often an obstacle to the way of perfection, were to her God's gifts with which to practice charity to the poor and the sick. Famous for the virtues of patience and obedience, she sanctified many by the order she founded. Pope Pius XI praised her highly for her spiritual heroism and self sacrifice.

Peter Chanel, 1803-41, was born at Cruet in France. As a student he was noted for his dependable, industrious, and agreeable character. He attained his goal, the priesthood, in 1827 and while engaged as a secular priest, was a fellow diocesan of St. John Vianney, the Cure' of Ars. His strong desire to serve the foreign missions was fulfilled in 1831 when he was among the first twenty Marist fathers to be professed. In 1836 he set sail for his mission, the tiny island of Fortuna, there to give his life for the faith of Christ. After only three seemingly fruitless years of work among the natives he was found axed to death in his hut. Not many years later, however, as a result of his work and martyrdom, the entire island converted to Catholicism.

Giuseppe Maria Pignatelli, 1737-

1811, was born at Saragossa in Spain, the son of a well-to-do nobleman. He received his early studies at the Jesuit College of Zaragoza and, in spite of opposition from his family, entered the Society of Jesus in 1753. As provincial of the Society in Italy, he was largely responsible for the restoration of the order in Naples and also founded colleges at Rome, Trivoli, and Orvieto. He avoided the oath of Napoleon and, during the exile of Pius VII, labored to keep the Jesuits unmolested in Sicily. In 1807, as a result of his efforts, the Society of Jesus was restored in Sardinia.

Yes, ordinary people of the 19th century, leading lives as different as any four people of the 20th century, were canonized saints of God. Every youth can find a model in young Dominic Savio, who led a simple life of virtue and holiness. Women can look to Maria di Rosa, who gave an example of charity to the world. The humdrum life of the factory did not upset her spiritual balance, for she used her influence and wealth as God desired. Peter Chanel, though not brilliant, became a missionary priest and led many to God. These servants of God, who lived simple lives of virtue, attained perfection their own way and now enjoy the bliss and honor of Saints of God.

## *Hail ! Saint Gaspar*

O Sainted Gaspar,—Father—hail!  
For long hast led the sacred Quest  
Of Hidden Manner,—Holy Grail—  
Thy life, thy works have stood the test.

The Master's path you trod, who taught  
Sweet peace in thought and word and deed;  
Reviled,—reviled not—but sought,  
In pray'r, humility, His mead.

Thy joy complete, thy crown secure,  
Inflame our hearts with love anew  
In all our souls God's grace mature,  
With Sainthood's zeal our wills imbue.

May this best tribute be our aim—  
Your constant wish—Madonna's joy—  
"The great round world" in loud acclaim  
Of Jesus, Lord, Her Heav'nly Boy.

*Reprinted from a Wilmington,  
Deleware, parish bulletin.*

# *Miracles Used for Gaspar's Canonization*

By  
Donald Ranly

It is perhaps surprising to some of us that it was not until 1947 that the Congregation of Rites began working for the canonization of St. Gaspar. It was in this year that the miraculous cure of Maria Seraphina Blanca occurred, and it was this miracle together with the healing of Francesco Campagna in 1929, that brought Blessed Gaspar's cause to the attention of the Congregation of Rites.

Maria Seraphina Blanca, from a small town called Putignano in southern Italy, had been suffering for 22 years from what was diagnosed as chronic gastro-intestinal catarrh. X-rays had revealed that

her right kidney was dislocated. In 1946, at the suggestion of the Fathers of the Precious Blood, she besought Blessed Gaspar for a cure. While in bed on the night of March 1, she suddenly found herself in the Mission House of the Fathers of the Precious Blood. In her presence was a missionary priest whom she at once recognized as Blessed Gaspar. When Blessed Gaspar asked her what she wanted of him, Maria asked for a miracle. He assured her that she would no longer be ill. Maria has been in excellent health ever since.

The miracle, however, was not approved by the Congregation. A few of the doctors would not exclude the possibility of imagined or produced symptoms of Maria's sickness, although other doctors proclaimed definitely that the patient knew nothing of medical lore, much less about a disease called gastro-intestinal catarrh.

In 1934 in Sezze, a town 45 miles southeast of Rome, Orsola Bono was taken home to die. A malignant tumor about the size of a fist was found in the woman's abdomen and because of her weak condition, an operation was impossible. From the beginning of her illness, Orsola's daughter, a Sister Giulia of the Adorers of the Precious Blood, had urged her to resign herself to the care of Blessed Gaspar. Sister Giulia acquired a few threads which had touched the body of Gaspar and had her mother swallow them in a glass of water. In May, the patient was lying on her bed unable to sleep

when Blessed Gaspar appeared to her and assured her of a cure very soon. Every trace of the disease had vanished by the next morning. It was Orsola's cure then that took the place of the miracle of 1947.

The other miracle that was used to make the necessary two for canonization occurred on May 19, 1929. In Campoli Appenino, near Sorra, about sixty miles southeast of Rome, Francesco Campagna was suffering from what had gone from influenza to bronchial pneumonia, with complications of toxemia and meningitis. The medical world could only leave him to die. But on that day a new statue of Blessed Gaspar was being carried in solemn procession to the church of St. Pancratius. When the statue passed the house of the sick Francesco, the mother, who had been seeking the aid of Blessed Gaspar already for days, commanded the young man to implore him for a cure. Almost immediately Francesco found himself by the window watching the procession. When it had passed, the seemingly death-taking disease passed with it. Francesco walked back to his bed, slept restfully, and woke up the next day in perfect health. A thorough examination showed lungs, heart, temperature, and respiration completely normal.

These were the three that made a Blessed Gaspar a Saint; the miracle of 1947 to open the Cause; the cures of 1929 and 1934 to complete

it. It would indeed be difficult to imagine the happiness of the three, Maria Seraphina Blanca, Orsola Bono, and Francesco Campagna, whom God chose as instruments to bring a humble missionary priest to the church's highest glorification, as they witnessed the ceremony that raised Gaspar to sainthood.

In 1938, a year after Gaspar's death, Ottavio Lo Stocco, a shepherd from Lenola was cured from a bad case of tuberculosis to mark the first step toward Gaspar's beatification. Because of strong use of alcohol and tobacco, the man's boyhood maladies developed rapidly into a serious form of pleurisy and imminent danger of death. The next stage of his illness was a case of tuberculosis so bad that the sufferer began coughing up pieces of his lungs.

Just as in the cure of Orsola Bono, 96 years later, Ottavio Lo Stocco was cured by swallowing some of the threads which touched the body of Gaspar. Canon Verardi, a priest of the vicinity, had given an aunt of Ottavio's the threads which were to mean his life.

Through an later apparition of Gaspar, a woman named Clementina Masini was instantaneously cured of chronic peritonitis and fisula.

A half-century ago these latter two miracles were approved by the Congregation of Rites, and on December 18, 1904, Gaspar was pronounced Blessed.

# *Priests Recount Their Impressions of Canonization*

By  
Robert Cromie

## **Canonization Impressions**

When Holy Mother Church raises a man or woman to the highest honors possible as a member of the Mystical Body of Christ, the event is always a memorable one. When that particular man or woman belongs to a religious community, there is an added note of interest to the proceedings, since the event calls together many members of the saint's congregation. From various parts of the world they converge upon Rome, perhaps for the first time, to visit the scenes of historical moment, to view the great basilica of Saint Peter, and above all, to participate in the ceremonies honoring their beloved saint.

Upon the announcement of Saint Gaspar's canonization, three priests and one brother prepared to make the journey to Rome as a representative group from Saint Joseph's. They were Fathers Kenkel, Sullivan, and Baird and Brother Cletus Scheur. Since Gaspar's canonization was the first and will probably be the only one within the next few years for

the Society of the Precious Blood, the travelers' impressions of the whole trip were awaited with some interest. Unfortunately, only two priests—Fathers Baird and Sullivan—could be reached for an immediate interview, and because of the lengthy trip, only questions which dealt with the canonization or events immediately connected with it were brought up.

The first question was a general one: What impressed you most during the canonization ceremonies? Was there any particular incident? Father Sullivan had this to say:

"Easily the most impressive moment of the whole ceremony for me was the procession of the Holy Father up the center of Saint Peter's piazza. He passed by just a few feet away from me. I had elbowed my way (in the best Roman fashion!) through the cheering crowd to get as close to him as possible, and believe me, the effort was worth it. It makes your spine tingle to watch that saintly figure move through the crowds, blessing them and giving

them that wonderful fatherly smile of his. For me it was the thrill of a lifetime!"

In connection with the previous question Father Sullivan was then asked what he considered the high point in the ceremony, particularly with reference to Saint Gaspar:

"The climax of Saint Gaspar's canonization, in my opinion, was the Holy Father's discourse on our founder. The fact that it is the representative of Jesus Christ Himself speaking to you must make any papal discourse impressive. But over and above that, Pius XII happens to be an extraordinarily compelling speaker. I had expected to hear the weak voice of an old man. But every syllable rang out clear and strong, and the utter sincerity and spiritual intensity of the man fairly burn their way inside you. The language barrier? Oddly enough, we Americans seemed to follow the tenor of his remarks fairly well, even though he was speaking in Italian. Explain it as you will—our familiarity with his subject (the life of Saint Gaspar), the closeness of Italian to Latin—or perhaps we were just so emotionally stirred that we would have thought we understood him even if he had been speaking Sanskrit!"

Father Baird preferred to join these two questions:

"Both the high point and the most impressive incident for me centered around that moment when for the first time the Vicar of Christ invoked Gaspar as a saint. The realization that for many years the community

had been praying for just this, and now the Holy Father was actually proclaiming it suddenly hit me. Also, I suppose, the realization that from now on Saint Gaspar could be invoked in Catholic churches throughout the entire world helped to make the occasion a memorable one."

Through Father Diller's "Impressions", which were printed in the June 21 issue of **The Gasparian**, it was learned that Saint Gaspar was popularly called the "Saint of Rome." There are two reasons for this: Gaspar lived in Rome across the street from the Church of the Gesu, and for many years Romans have celebrated his feast on a special day with Gaspar's own mass. How do the Romans respond to the title? Is their devotion towards him deeper than towards any other **canonizandus**? Remarked Father Baird:

"That is a hard question to answer when one hasn't spent a great deal of time in Rome. Undoubtedly the clergy and lay people have a great veneration for Saint Gaspar. This was brought out very well by the tremendous ovation he received when the Pope declared him a saint. And I did hear many of the priests there constantly refer to Gaspar as the 'Saint of Rome,' showing, of course, that they sincerely meant that title. One especially—the Cardinal Vicar of Rome—consistently coupled the title with the name of Gaspar. But as for making a comparison, I'm really not in a position to do so."

Father Sullivan agreed with Father Baird:

"Since Saint Gaspar is the first

Roman to be canonized in a long time, he can very rightly be called in a special way the 'Saint of Rome'. As far as the devotion of the Italian people is concerned, I don't think I could make a comparison between him and the other four canonized with him. At the canonization ceremonies, Dominic Savio was cheered loudest and longest; the swarms of youngsters from the Salesian schools saw to that. But Gaspar does seem to be well known and loved in Rome. One evidence for that was the fine turnout for the triduum in his honor held at the Gesu."

In **The Gasparian** Father Diller also mentioned that "there is constant motion and movement among the people in these churches, no matter what is going on anyplace in the building." How does this free attitude strike an American? Father Sullivan responded:

"An Anglo-Saxon is surely taken aback when he first sees—and hears!—what the Italians do in church. Judged by American standards, they are sadly lacking in decorum. But of course those are the wrong standards for Italians. Latins are simply far more demonstrative in every phase of life than we cold and dour Northerners. As Father Behen pointed out to me, 'After all, these people do **enjoy** their religion.' With all the exuberance of children, they give free play to their feelings, in church or out. Their minds have never been crossed by the least shadow of Puritanism—which, one suspects, affects even us Catholics in the States, at least subconsciously, so

that we instinctively feel that religion is a rather grim and joyless affair."

And Father Baird put it this way:

"The answer there revolves around the simple fact that Romans consider themselves children of God and the church is the house of God. They act freely in God's home, just as we would act with complete freedom in our own homes. Then too, Saint Peter's almost fosters ready and easy conversation. There are no pews; one just has to turn around and he can speak with seven or eight different people. When I first entered the basilica, it impressed me as strange, but I soon realized that it is customary for Italians. At least everyone took the freedom for granted."

Many of us who have never had the chance to visit Rome or Saint Peter's basilica often wonder about the Sistine Choir. One generally associates the finest in church music with that choir, because it sings for all great liturgical events in Saint Peter's. Father Sullivan was asked his opinion of the world-famous organization. He replied:

"I heard them twice: over the public address system in Saint Peter's piazza and again inside Saint Peter's the next day. The public address system is an excellent one: it does a good job of getting the words out clearly to the hundreds of thousands in that huge piazza. But it's expecting too much of any such system to hope for it to bring out all the rich qualities of a fine choir. The singing came off much better the

next day inside Saint Peter's although even there a problem in acoustics continues to exist. The world's largest church is not the ideal setting for a choir. In general, I came away with the impression of having heard some very fine church music, but I'm afraid I can't be much more definite than that. The big reason, no doubt, is that the music was something very secondary to me that day. When you are part of a fervid Roman crowd watching a papal ceremony in all the riot of light and color that Saint Peter's is—well, unless you are a trained musician, you just don't close your eyes and concentrate on the music."

It was mentioned previously that in all likelihood the Society of the Precious Blood will not be honored with another saint in the next few years. Yet, after nearly on hundred

and fifty years of eventful life, there should be someone who would come in for careful consideration, in the hope that he will eventually be canonized. For an answer to this, Father Baird was asked to comment:

"Now that Saint Gaspar, the founder and first moderator general of our community, has been raised to the honors of the altar, priests of the society are looking forward to the advancement of the cause of Venerable John Merlini, the third moderator general, whose remains have been transferred to a vault in Saneta Maria in Trivo near those of Saint Gaspar himself. It was thought by many that John Merlini might be canonized before our founder, but now that Gaspar has been elevated to this honor, it is my hope—and the priests' of the society—that Merlini's cause will soon be revived."



# *Circular Letters of Saint Gaspar*



*At the time of the yearly retreat of his newly founded community, Saint Gaspar deemed it opportune to distribute an exhortation in the form of letters. They contain practical guides for attaining spiritual perfection, and instructions on the qualifications required of Community members. In the reading of these eleven letters of Saint Gaspar the reader becomes fully conscious of the sanctity and lofty ideals and the all-penetrating love of God which made Gaspar del Bufalo a saint of God. These letters are taken from the original translations and have been carefully edited and revised by the members of the Saint Gaspar Club of Xavier Hall.*

## *First Letter*

Twelve years have now elapsed since our Community, so long prosperous, took its rise in the Church of Christ. You will readily grant how well it is suited to re-enkindle proper conduct and the spirit of the Apostles in the secular clergy of our time. In this letter I do not intend to consider particulars. I wish only to arouse in both you and myself the true spirit which is absolutely necessary for the work of the Lord. It cannot be denied that heretofore the scope of our Community has called us to various works. But like a painting that is first sketched, then outlined, afterwards perfected, and finally executed, so also has it happened to our Community, which is now in the state of being perfected and shall be ennobled for the greater glory of God, whom alone we serve.

Our missionaries, to my mind, represent so many mystic stones hewn for a gigantic structure, reminiscent of the words of St. Paul: "You are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Jesus Christ Himself as the chief cornerstone." These stones, however, must be formed by the stroke of the mystic chisel to that perfection which is required of us: "Scalpri salubris ictibus." This formation must be precisely our endeavor in the course of the retreat, which should be memorable to us all, that we might erect the mystic building with eternal blessings.

Allow me to repeat both for you and myself the words of St. Paul, that "it is now the hour for us to rise from sleep." These words the saints apply not only to sinners who convert to God, but to all the children of redemption, who also must be led to extraordinary holiness. While preaching to others, we ourselves must not fail. We must protect ourselves from the snares of the one who is the enemy of all, but who attacks the ministers of Christ's Gospel and holy religion with special energy. We must arm ourselves with courage, generosity, and sublime zeal to be all for Christ. We must grow in virtue, continue to exercise deep humility before God, and acquire compassion for our fellowman. All these points should be based upon the spirit of prayer. The time is at hand when we must have that internal virtue which counterbalances the influence of our external occupations. We must realize our grave responsibilities to God because of our very special and sublime vocation. We will therefore say with the Prophet: "I was exercised and swept my spirit, for a most severe judgement shall be for them that bear rule."

Let us then meditate on the motives that prompted us to devote ourselves to this great work. Let us also examine the disposition with which we have carried out our various duties. Were we perhaps discouraged in trials and sufferings, instead of meditating on the words of the Apostle: "I overflow with joy in all our troubles." Or were we negligent

in our duties and observance of the rule? We must remember that, after all, our rule is only a summary, so to say, of those principles which we preach to those of our calling. Those principles, however, we ourselves fail to practice because of certain well-known excuses, i.e., the wanton delusions that destroy virtue in its beginnings and from its very foundations. Some may believe that they are here for an end directly opposed to that of the Community. They ignore the advice of others and follow their own opinions. But such is the miserable condition of man, that the saying of the saints is only too true: "We all are patients in the great hospital of this world." Weaknesses are cured, however, by the oil of meekness and docility; by overcoming self-love in victorious obedience to our superiors; by "bearing with one another in love," correcting each other with patience and bearing with one another in constancy and love.

Not the walls that surround us, nor the men with whom we live, but rather the victory over our own will, even in spiritual things (that mystic childhood to which Christ calls us), this alone makes us more perfect. It forms the framework of the holiness which we lack. This holiness must be absolutely sought after during our retreat. "Purge out the old leaven." "But put on the Lord Jesus Christ." Woe to us if love of our own convenience, if insubordination, unfaithfulness to our good resolutions, or the neglect of leading a life of the spirit should make us guilty be-

fore God! Our Community shall truly progress the more happily in proportion to our becoming men of the spirit. Despite the sufferings and hardships which are always present, the enemy shall never triumph. "For when I am weak, then I am strong." They that seek the Lord shall not be deprived of any good." Through the goodness of our most loving Father, we shall even see continuous miracles of grace. He has loved, and loves, us so dearly. He tenderly shows us His Sacred Heart as a sweet asylum for souls thirsting for Jesus Christ. Could it be possible that we custodians and dispensers of the Heavenly Treasures be deprived of the riches which adorned the daughters of Sion? Indeed, neither the place where we live, nor the insignias we wear form the essentials of holiness. On the contrary, a holy life, desire for perfection, thirst for the love of God, confidence in Him, willingness to bear cheerfully all sacrifices for His sake, these qualities make us saints. Father Segneri says that people usually revere and venerate us. But it is one thing to appear as a saint outwardly, and another, to be one in reality. "For he is not approved who commends himself, but he whom God commends." If until now we have not seen a greater triumph of the divine glory in our holy work, we must ascribe the insufficiency to our words which did not come from a true heart, or at least from a heart not adequately contrite at the feet of the Crucified.

Let us therefore pray for one another and put all our trials in the

wounds of the crucified Jesus. Then we shall find a healing remedy: consolation, encouragement, and salvation. Let us sincerely love our Community "with a holy kiss" so that "we also may walk in newness of life." But above all, let us continually watch that the enemy may not deceive us. "And may the peace of God which surpasses all understanding guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

### BROTHERS

Care and solicitude for your souls are deeply impressed upon our heart, for God says that "if anyone does not take care of his own, and especially of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." It would therefore be preposterous for us to break the bread of the Gospel for others and see you die of hunger. But praise and bless God "Who satisfieth thy desire with good things." He has given you a proof of His concern for your welfare, especially during the holy retreats, which we have needed for our spiritual uplift. I would like you to make three resolutions during these days. The first refers to God, the second to yourselves, and the third to the Community.

In regard to God, thank Him for having freed you from the many dangers of the world. "O blessed walls," exclaim with St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi, "you enclose me, but also defend me." Your daily bread, therefore, with which you must nourish and strengthen your souls in profound humility is the Divine Presence and an awareness

of having to give an account to God for His gifts.

As for yourselves, remember that living in a Community House requires especially the resolution of laying aside the old Adam. I mean that you should suppress your passions and imitate Jesus Christ. Therefore, overcome your anger by patience, selfishness by charity, and negligence by justice. You are no longer your own, but you belong to Jesus Crucified. Your holy life and good example should therefore be a continuous mission to the people. And since we are debtors to both the wise and the unwise, guard your looks, words, and actions well. Even though you may at times escape the eyes of your superior, the all-seeing eye of God, before Whose court you must appear, you cannot evade. Finally, since it is customary to attribute the faults of an individual to the Community, I advise you to look upon our Community as a spiritual field where virtue must be cultivated. Does not God at times permit the intellects of virtuous souls to be confused for your sake? This fact, in consequence, will demand more heroic virtue on your part. Be careful not to cause the least discord. Be lovers of silence. Shun criticism and ridicule, which wound both charity and perfection. Let all things be stepping stones to heaven. Deny your own will and accept the bitter things for sweet and the sweet for bitter, and you will be saints. Whoever sows the field, sows with fatigue and labor. In the field of the Gospel, we sow with patience and suffering.

Did you think perhaps that Community life would be free from crosses? You deceive yourselves. Did you perhaps enter the Community from human motives and not divine, perhaps to escape reproaches at home, to throw off the yoke of paternal authority, to evade labor in the fields, to suffer no deprivation in your life, and the like? If you love the Community, my dear Brothers, change your minds. Look into yourselves, and should you find there a love for a virtue which you see in others, practice it incessantly. Let the Community and its every member be dear to you. Put aside all hatred, aversion, prejudice, and pride. In their place put charity, docility, humility, prudence, and a sincere desire for the success of the Community. In short, let the Community be your way to heaven.

#### SEMINARIANS

During the retreat let the students keep before their minds the purpose of the Community. The assaults of the devil are directed especially against the young. All must know, therefore, that his attacks are to be strenuously resisted. May the Father make their souls keen and wary. May He point out to them the way of salvation.

#### ADDITIONAL ADVICE

Let whoever conducts the spiritual exercises first practice what he preaches, lest he be told, "Physician, heal thyself." Or perhaps the following words will be said of him: "Lest perhaps after preaching to others I myself should be rejected." May he shed many tears before the

Lord and preach by example (which must proceed from a pure heart) rather than by word.

Let those who give orders learn how to serve. They should rule their brethren by exhortation rather than by command. In example, prayer, and charity let them excel all others, always joyfully and promptly helping everyone in need. Always show prudence, polite manners, and a well-ordered courtesy with each other. Our hearts must be free from all things foreign to our calling and occupation. Love to talk with God. Be an apostle of the missions and a contemplative at home, but be this in accordance with the rule. Finally, be angelic in all your actions.

## *Second Letter*

Dear brethren, "The time of visitation has arrived." Our most loving God calls us to the mystical mountain. Moses of old received the supreme commands of the Most High from the midst of the burning thorn bush that he might later carry them out faithfully. In like manner should we upon the mountain of perfection heed the voice of our most affectionate Father that we might afterwards be able to communicate His divine will to others. How should we not humble ourselves before God when contemplating our sublime calling and the responsibilities which we have in virtue of our sacred duties, our talents granted by the Lord, and the heavenly treasures entrusted to our care.



Vast and encircling, the piazza of St. Peter's Basilica provided the setting for the outdoor canonization ceremonies on the evening of June 12, 1954.

## *Canonization Ceremonies of St. Gaspar del Bufalo*





According to canonization custom, banners depicting scenes from lives of the saints are carried through the crowds to the basilica.

Gaspar's devotion to the Madonna of the Precious Blood is depicted on this banner borne to the papal throne.



Having descended the Scala Regia from the Vatican Palace, Pope Pius, flanked by the papal guards, enters the piazza on the **sedia gestatoria**.

Bishops of both Eastern and Roman rites precede the College of Cardinals as the canonization procession winds through thousands of spectators in the square.



Enjoining the multitude in the piazza to pray with him for guidance in raising a new saint, the Holy Father chants "Orate."



Immediately prior to making the official proclamation of canonization, the Pontiff kneels humbly in silent prayer with members of his court.

As Supreme Pontiff of the Roman Church, the Pope receives the homage of the individual cardinals, each presenting him with a large wax candle representative of their tribute.

The Holy Father is carried by his throne bearers into the Basilica to attend the Mass in honor of Saint Gaspar on Sunday morning.







In the presence of the Holy Father and assisted by the Princes of the Church, Cardinal Tisserant begins the mass before the Papal altar in St. Peter's.

Priests, bishops, cardinals, the diplomatic corps, and the Papal Guards, all join the Pope in offering the Sunday Mass at the high altar, directly over the tomb of st. Peter.







The mass ended, the Holy Father bestows his papal blessing on the throngs of faithful inside St. Peter's as he returns to the Vatican.

Seated on his throne in the apse of the basilica, Pope Pius assists at the first mass in honor of the newly canonized Saint Gaspar.

Attacks still besetting the Church, the deplorable condition of the times, our deficiency in the wisdom of the saints, our habitual remissness at divine service, and the disregard for our rule (a spiritual guide to remind us of the obligations which we have assumed at the foot of the altar)—these, dearly beloved, are the cause for our sighs to God, for the flood of tears which we should shed in the shadow of the Cross. If in last year's retreat God inspired us to occasionally examine ourselves about our obligation to further the progress of our Community by perfecting ourselves in the spiritual life, this year He imbues us with a salutary admonition proceeding from the sentiments we then experienced. This admonition the two missionaries, Blessed Leonard and Venerable Paul of the Cross communicated to each other in reciprocal love by the words: "The apostolic life is based upon the internal life of the spirit." Now, are we men of the spirit? Do we have that love of God which qualifies us to enter the Sanctuary and to be the teachers of the people and the sanctifiers of their souls? If we ourselves are not deeply affected by the very truths which are to move the people to tears, we will be "as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." Though we sacrifice our health in the ministry, what will it avail us if we are not entirely animated with charity? "If I deliver my body to be burned, yet do not have charity, it profits me nothing." But how blessed are we if at the foot of the Cross we acquire the life of the spirit. This life is,

indeed, the soul of every holy undertaking. Then everyone, being absorbed in God, will be able to understand and to repeat the words of the Apostle: "By the grace of God, I am what I am." "What has thou that thou has not received?" Again, "I am not worthy to be called an Apostle." "If I must boast, I will boast of the things that concern my weakness." "I am the least of the apostles," " . . . but I chastise my body and bring it into subjection, lest perhaps after preaching to others I myself should become rejected."

These are the principles, most beloved—"whom I love in charity unfeigned, in the bowels of Jesus Christ"—which beget in us the internal life of union with God. Certainly the soul imbued with these thoughts will exclaim: "It is now no longer I that live, but Christ lives in me." Father Avila, a very able teacher of the spiritual life, once wrote that only when the love of God reigns in the heart, will one feed the flock of the Lord well. Therefore he was accustomed to repeat the words of Christ to St. Peter: "If thou lovest me, feed my sheep." It was this love that urged the Apostle to say: "I wished myself to be an anathema for my brethren." This love sweetened his sufferings during his apostolate so that he said, "I am filled with comfort, I overflow with joy in all our troubles." This divine love finally urged him to acquire the wisdom of the saints, i.e., to consider all other things as mere waste: "I count them but as dung, that I may gain Christ . . . I count every-

thing loss because of the excelling knowledge of Jesus Christ."

We will ask how we shall become thus enkindled by this heavenly fire. I will not answer this question because I, too, am in need of being kindled. God Himself, though, will answer with the following analogy. A reed is very susceptible to the action of fire, because, since it is hollow, it is easily enveloped by the flames. Now are we emptied of ourselves? Let the answer to this question constitute the true test for this retreat. "The just shall shine and shall run to and fro among the reeds." Truly, dearly beloved, the evil of which we must rid ourselves is rooted within us, not in the places where we live. Let this be our one cause to be dead to the whole world and to live only for Jesus Crucified. Well do I know that I am addressing men of the spirit, but the common enemy of the good molests especially these most severely. Carry out what has been counseled, therefore, that the Lord may "direct your hearts in the love of God and the patience of Christ."

#### SEMINARIANS

*The flowers have appeared in our land . . . stay me up with flowers.*

In the garden of the Church, Mary gathers three flowers and places them into your hands: the white lily, the red rose, and the pale violet. The lily is the symbol of purity of conscience and of life. The rose represents that burning love which purifies, perfects, and elevates the heart to God. The violet is the emblem of

the evangelical mortification which keeps us white and ruddy according to the desire of the Beloved of our hearts, Who is "white and ruddy. (Cant. 5:10) . . . and Who feedeth among the lilies." (Cant. 2:16) The picture of the lily draws you away from the world. The image of the rose unites you with the Heart of Jesus. The violet, finally, makes you partakers of the fruits of the Cross of Jesus. May the most holy Virgin Mary, who presents you with these flowers, find them still in your hands in your last agony as a pledge for entrance into the home to which are admitted only the pure lovers of Jesus Crucified.

#### BROTHERS

In the name of God I will place before you three considerations about which you should humbly examine yourselves. The first refers to the end for which you withdrew into our midst, the second to the mode of life you lead with us, the third to the dispositions with which you entered upon this present retreat.

St. Bernard asked his monks: "My children, for what purpose are we in the monastery?" Meditate on this question and closely examine what brought you to the Community. The purpose must be the welfare of the soul. This, in short, comprises all.

What sort of life are we to follow? Not the walls that enclose us, nor solely the rule which guides us will make us saints. Holiness is the result of mortifying the passions and of prayerful union with God. The lack of self-denial, disobedience and

disrespect, strife with one another, failure to love our Community—all this is opposed to the spiritual life. May heaven protect you against such diabolical evils.

Enter upon this holy retreat, therefore, holding in your hands the book of the Crucifix. Shield yourselves against the onslaughts of hell by fleeing to the protection of Mary. Finally, break the pride of Lucifer with humble prayer. Live for God, live in His presence, unite yourselves solely and most intimately with Him. Then, most dearly beloved, you will be holy and blessed.

### *Third Letter*

*“Be diligent in reading, in exhortation, and in teaching. Do not neglect the grace . . . given thee . . . with the laying on of hands of the presbyterate.”*

Dear brothers, having these words of the Apostle in mind, we return to the spiritual exercises which may be the last of our life! Devotion to the priesthood and its responsibility before God and man, should this not call us to a most studious examination of our life? If St. Paul, that exalted preacher of the Gospel, trembled, “lest perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway;” what will then be our portion, who in the light of so many circumstances find every motive to truthfully acknowledge before the Divine Presence: “I am not worthy to be called an Apostle . . . If I must boast . . . I will glory in

my infirmities.” How important it is, then, to understand what the Apostle emphasizes in his letter to the Thessalonians: “Strive to live peacefully, minding your own affairs . . . ” Certainly upon these points we must direct our examination to achieve the implication of the text quoted. Should it be possible that while busy with others, we neglect ourselves, or at least not sufficiently provide for our own soul? Time passes; eternity is the great goal of man. We are the dispensers of the sacred mysteries. Oh, that we never experience the fate those who toil and labor to amass fleeting treasure! Their fatigue is their prize; the treasure is not their own. Let us conduct ourselves as we should, with a view to employ adequate means. However, often do we not dispense the divine treasures to souls, while we perhaps remain poor and needy through our own fault? Attend, therefore, “to stir up the grace of God which is in thee, by the laying on of my hands.” From these considerations it does not follow that we should abandon what we have undertaken, namely, the apostolate among the people; “For in so doing,” continues St. Paul, “thou wilt save both thyself and those who hear thee.”

Our examination at the foot of the Cross shall center particularly on three points. First, the knowledge of our shortcomings from which arises our deficiency before God. Secondly, the examination of our observance of the interior discipline, which may be called “Manuductio

ad Coelum." Finally, we shall turn our eyes, but prudently and reflectively, to the outer aspect of apostolic labor not merely to have a knowledge of good in general, but to seek the greater good, which can and must be furthered. With perfect zeal we must seek the greater glory of the God Whom we serve. This searching of the heart will move us to practice what the Prophets confesses: "And I was exercised and I swept my spirit." Over and above this, this searching will make us eager to find the means for the attainment of our purpose. These means are threefold: a continuous inner converse with God about our needs and interests; a deep study of humility, that we may be capable of receiving special gifts from God or the renewal of our life; and a flaming desire for the inner and hidden life in the Adorable Wounds of the Crucified. There will we derive strength to wage war against Satan and gain over him most glorious victories: "For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God."

We add yet a warning to forestall three obstacles which constitute an embarrassment for those walking in the ways of the Lord. Whenever evangelical fortitude does not inspire us with knowledge needed to overcome them, faithful communion with God will be effective. The first of these obstacles is our innate weakness. Our common tempter uses it against us under the guise of outstanding, though passing, virtue. From this flows laziness,

despair, and even the temptation to disgust at good itself: "My strength hath left me, and the light of my eyes is not with me." To what lengths does not the demon go to harm those who work for the glory of God? But "they overcome him through the Blood of the Lamb." One glance at the Divine Blood, and we are aroused to toil with untiring zeal and to work in the true spirit of God; for "whoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God." We shall work, but we shall be so possessed of virtue, that in our labors no voice of flesh and blood, nor of any other desire will be heard: "Flesh and blood hath not revealed this to thee." We shall work, but with joy and holy delight in God. We know that while we now arouse ourselves to toil with joy, we shall then bear the Cross of Jesus Christ with palms and triumphs throughout a blissful eternity. Because this Cross is the golden ladder to heaven, we shall not cease to exclaim: "I am filled with comfort; I overflow with joy in all our troubles."

The second obstacle which may retard our apostolic career is excessive attachment to our own opinions and desires. From this proceeds the weakness which we have considered above. Knowing this, the Apostle exclaims: "I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ," which is equivalent to saying: I desire to be bound by love to Jesus. If we think of the manner in which the Most High manifests His Divine Will, this heavenly love will force us to cry out:

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Every other bond is now cut off, and the will of the Lord alone triumphs!

The last obstacle against which we must carefully guard is lack of prayerfulness. For through prayer God communicates divine light, and the soul acquires heavenly wisdom. Precisely from a neglect of prayer come the dangers already warned against. In thinking of divine things, our hearts are like a ship which, though beset by destructive winds and furious storms, carries its precious cargo to port safely. In other words, a prayerful soul, fixing its gaze on God, does not suffer shipwreck on the stormy sea of this world.

These are the sentiments, dearly beloved, which we impart during the present retreat for our mutual edification. We hope they will produce in everyone those corresponding effects which are indeed the fruit of the divine word. May the exercises be our mystical food and drink, to fulfill the sacred precept: "Eating and drinking, arise ye princes." This text signifies: let us arise to the exalted estate which the Cross of Christ established for us: "And the government is upon his shoulder." "He conquered the world not with the sword, but with the Cross," says St. Augustine. Triumphant over the passions, over the world, over the infernal enemy, we shall one day chant the new canticle of exultation throughout the eternal years: "We shall sing a new song . . . in the land of the living." So be it, dearest

brothers, through the help of the Mother of God and the protection of St. Francis Xavier.

#### SEMINARIANS

*"Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone."*

These are the wishes of the Community to which you, my dear seminarians, have dedicated yourselves, that now, being in the house of sanctification to accomplish the designs of our Holy Mother the Church, you may verify the sacred words: "Built upon, etc." The apostles were called to follow the Redeemer: ". . . they left all and followed Him." You are likewise called to the apostolic mission. By the grace of God you have left your homes and all that could hinder your generous steps to the priesthood, and now you are in the house of God. Admire God's fatherly watchfulness over you: "Behold now bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord." The apostles, indeed, at first generously welcomed, and with fullness of heart followed the Savior. But later they became timid and weak to such a degree that they deserted Him during the Passion. "Then all the disciples left Him and fled." Thus it sometimes happens that a soul dedicates himself freely to God, but in the course of time what havoc does not the infernal enemy effect, and that at the expense of conscience? How often does not your want of fervor open the way to disillusionment, gloom, and even regret of the step you have taken? Over this the enemy rejoices. But

woe to you if prompt resistance is not offered to his diabolical suggestions! In what manner did the Lord act with His apostles? He assembled them in the holy Cenacle under the august patronage of His own Mother. Then He called them to recollection, silence, and prayer that they might thereby implore a renewal of spirit and religious generosity: "And with great power the apostles gave testimony to the resurrection of Jesus Christ Our Lord." So too, God works in us during the days of retreat in order to forestall every attack of the demon.

He called you, my dear young men, to the mystical Cenacle, the solitude of retreat. He wishes to communicate His spirit to you in a particular manner. He wants to strengthen your hearts, fortify you with virtue, and lead you to holiness so that you may depart from this holy retirement spiritually revived, and able to fight the enemy of your soul with greater strength and courage. When you have subdued your foes from within, may you become apostles of God's glory. For you the hour of the great apostolate has not yet come, but the time to acquire the necessary dispositions is at hand. Now you must learn to handle spiritual weapons: "He teacheth my hands to war." Now preparation is made for the necessities in the struggle. Now the ambush of the enemy is exposed, and now the plan is laid for his defeat. Is not this a great apostolic preparation? Take these words to heart, dearly beloved. Listen with docility, as did Samuel in the temple, to the

promptings of grace, and guard it carefully. Ponder well upon the full meaning of the text cited above: "Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone."

As the prophets of old proclaimed future events, so now will your superiors lovingly and zealously make known to you the means of understanding those things which pertain to the divine priesthood. (For God has given them to you as guides in your career to aid you in building upon the mystic foundation of the apostles, which always rests on the mystical rock, Jesus Christ.) Your superiors will call your attention to the dangers to be met. They will announce to you what Jesus Himself declared to us: "And you will be hated by all men for my name's sake . . . Behold, I am sending you forth like sheep in the midst of wolves." They will also comfort you in warring with your mighty enemies. In the name of the same Jesus, they will offer you the assurance which is promised in the sacred pages: "To him who overcomes, I will give the hidden manna, and . . . a new name." This is the manna God keeps prepared as the food of your soul, to sustain and bear you up on the way to perfection. The spirit of humility toward God, meekness toward your neighbor, and charity among yourselves should be your guide in this holy task. Let us always be aware, however, that "no one, having put his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

May the grace, peace, and love of Jesus always be with you. May the powerful protection of Mary and great Xavier be our support in life, our comfort in death, and our introduction into the holy kingdom of God.

### BROTHERS

*"I have chosen to be an object in the house of my God rather than to dwell in the tabernacle of sinners."*

Dear Brothers, these are the mystical tabernacles in which you are sheltered for this one purpose, namely, to flee the dangers of the world with a greater spirit of perfection and to earnestly seek to imitate Jesus. But how is Jesus imitated? Only look at Him. As an example to us, He is obedient to St. Joseph and **Mary**, and lives in the humblest of homes. He is employed at manual labor, shows Himself a model of silence and is withdrawn from the world. In persecution and mockery He holds His peace and forgives those who mistreat Him. Tortured and afflicted, become the "Man of Sorrows," He joyfully embraces the cross for the good of souls, and consummates thereon the Great Sacrifice. Strive, dearly beloved, "that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodily frame." At the time you became members of the Community, the world perhaps in scorn and derision sought to make you falter in your resolutions. Satan, too, desired that the love of comfort, attachment to your own opinions, rudeness in conduct, and self-will take the place of these good reso-

lutions and the life in the service of God. What, then, did the good Lord do? He showed you a way to ground yourselves in humility, obedience, and sacrifice in the hidden and forsaken life. He rejoices to hear you repeat: "I have chosen to be an object." Open the eyes of your mind and learn that everyone is obliged to suffer, and that through affliction, virtue strikes deeper roots into men's hearts. Therefore, continually strive to imitate Christ. May evangelical simplicity, obedience to your superiors, and reverence towards the ways of Providence make your life virtuous not only in name, but in deed also. While there are many brethren (we are all brethren in Jesus Christ) contributing to the promotion of the good, it is you who relieve them of numerous obligations which would lessen their activity for the glory of the Lord: the designation "fratres inservientes" reminds you of just this fact. Seek, then, to be of service in the work of God, and respect the will of the Creator in His creatures. No task is menial if it tends to glorify the Most High. On the contrary, your work is similar to that of Jesus Christ, who aided His foster father, St. Joseph. Purity of intention alone is necessary for you to properly regulate your interior and exterior actions. Consider also that a hidden and humble life is a special shield against vanity and human glory.

In concluding, I will bring out what I wish you to be in the moral order by using the example of the dove and the ark. The Community

is for you an ark. It shelters you. The dove represents the purity of life you should possess. The mission of the dove is an example of your duties. You are sent on your mission to defeat the crafty enemy of souls. You should return to the ark carrying an olive branch, a symbol of victory and triumph, as did the white dove. Hence, live for God through the holiness of your conduct. Live with Him by promoting His work, namely, the Community to which you have dedicated your life. Always live in God by walking in His Presence, conscious that He is everywhere. Do this not only to become holy, but also to be perfected in holiness: "Walk before me, and be perfect." Through the intercession of Blessed Mary and of our special advocate St. Francis Xavier, may the Most High fill you with heavenly blessings.

## *Fourth Letter*

### **FOURTH LETTER**

There must be a strong interior life in the priest. This life must always be renewed, so that with rich merit it will respond to the Divine Will. We do not deny that in the past a great influence for good may have been exerted by our Foundations, our Ecclesiastical Houses of Study, and the various divisions of apostolic labor to which God has called us. But have we completed the work which Providence has entrusted to us? Scarcely yet! Much remains to be accomplished in holy discipline as to ourselves individually, the Com-

munity in which we live, and the Apostolate with which we are entrusted. As for ourselves, have we not every reason to cry out: O great God, Who deignest to choose us for the most sublime ministry of Thy greater glory! What far greater progress would we not show, if we were animated with that ennobling spirit of deep humility, unalterable patience, and unwearied zeal in response to the heavenly gifts vouchsafed to us! "I am the man that sees my poverty," Our self-love, obstinacy of opinion, neglect of the many means well-suited to our perfection offered by the Community—what motives do these not give us for just sorrow and deep sighs in Thy Presence! Come then, O Divine Husbandman, visit yet this year, possibly the last of our life, the mystical vineyard of our souls. Come, Lord, "and visit this vineyard, and perfect the same which Thy right hand hath planted."

With docility let us listen to Thy just complaint, "I planted thee a chosen vineyard . . . yet how art thou turned unto me into bitterness." These are the plants of a father solicitous for the welfare of his children. Already we see in us the fulfillment of the Scriptural Word, "My soul melted when he (God) spoke." O blessed days in which God speaks to the heart in a special manner, desiring to purify and loose it from every body and to raise it to lofty desires of sanctity. In other words, to set forth this very sanctity itself in the resplendence of the external work of the priestly life. Hallowed days in which,

united with Mary in this mystic Cenacle, we implore the gifts of the Divine Spirit so that we may end our retreat with the sweet consolation of willing, with the assistance of divine grace, to fulfill the word of the sacred page: "The just shall shine, and shall run to and fro like sparks among the reeds. They shall judge nations, and rule over people, and their Lord shall reign forever." Indeed, "the just shall shine." Behold the evangelical worker who has again put on Jesus Christ. He, through the mystical lamps of virtue, illuminates his neighbor: "the lamps thereof are the fire and flames."

The minister of the Gospel is not satisfied, however, to carry out the supreme will of God by uninterrupted study of the science of the Saints. He seeks, in addition, to edify his brethern in the Community, especially in the house where he lives. He is convinced that his first duty is to be an example to all. "The just shall shine." He has regard for every member of the Community, and indeed, does all to gain all for Jesus Christ. He has sympathy for human wretchedness, understands human deficiency and frailty, seeks to inspire all to put off the old Adam, to be, as we have said, newly clothed in Jesus Crucified. He knows that the first duty of the Apostolate must be directed toward the training of his own, for "If anyone does not take care of his own, and especially of his household, he has denied the faith, and is worst than an unbeliever." Aware of this fact, what does he not do for the sanctification of all in the

adorable Heart of Jesus? How does he not exert himself in all discretion and zeal, that the supreme decrees of God be executed, and our houses may be found as mystical reeds that burn? They "shall run to and fro like sparks among the reeds." Since a reed is hollow and fragile, it is easily swayed by the wind. Thus the soul, to be enveloped by the fire of God's love, will respond to divine grace and endeavor to free the mystical earth from the affairs of the world, which leave no room for the love of God. The soul, moreover, admits its own frailty. Finally, it knows the tempter's persistence in agitating the spirit, and hence cries out, "Thou art my strength, O God, whom should I fear?" It will yet happen that an apostolate man must demand this manner of life from others, even though he find himself deficient. Prudence, charity, and evangelical meekness will, therefore, besides prayer, be the means especially conducive to our end. Everyone should here examine himself on his personal conduct towards our Own.

Lastly, a missionary, filled with the true spirit of God, will render himself as an instrument in the hands of the Lord, to confirm the second part of the text above: "They shall judge the nations and rule over people." "They shall judge" in the zeal and practice of the Ministry. "They shall rule" in the prestige which the Priesthood itself will gain before the people, and the consequent luster of God's glory. Their Lord shall reign forever. In the vice will find its re-

proof, nor will be heard the rebuke: "Physician, cure thyself!" The generation of sinners in particular shall they judge, yet in such a manner as the Apostle said: "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ." They will inculcate a salutary fear of the divine judgements, with which the one who preaches the Gospel will also be imbued. They will preach to the heart from the heart, not seeking what is theirs, but what is Jesus Christ's. Their bearing will be dignified and humble, prudent, simple, and patient. No rivalry, no disputes, no vanity, and no self-interest will have place. Only the interests of divine glory of their own welfare and the welfare of others will animate them. As combatants, they will uphold the cause of religion. As untiring workers in apostolic field, they will continually insist on setting new plants, still again on laying out fair vineyards, to bear out the saying: "the vines in flower yield their sweet smell." After this, they will set up a hedge that will prevent the vineyard from being destroyed by the persecutor of the good. For that reason, missions and spiritual retreats are important to them.

Furthermore, do we not realize that the Lord unceasingly reminds us: "I have chosen you . . . that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain." This point, in particular, needs examination. Is it also possible that we can read the accounts of St. Paul's painstaking journeys without being moved: how he spent himself for

his people, and when he himself could not visit, how he substituted his disciples to dispatch his fervent epistles, which would incite the good and rouse the newly-fallen sinners. Here we have the origin of the occasional sermons of our rule, held in places near an admonition precisely to this burning zeal for the welfare of souls, at least in the sphere of the work to which God calls us? We must acquire fervor and a spiritual thirst for souls now. But who will find it, if not he who stands at the mystical fountain of the wounds of Jesus Christ? Meditating, then, on the mysteries of the Divine Blood, one feels a great zeal for the salvation of men: "Who is weak and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I am not inflamed?" "For I could wish to be anathema myself from Christ for the sake of my brethren." When we have imagined that we have lived a life in keeping with the high state of our priesthood, we have scarcely begun. Let us tremble in the sight of God. Yet without losing confidence, let us be filled with confusion at ourselves on account of the responsibility, the duties imposed upon us, and the sluggishness with which we have perhaps fulfilled them. In every event, "when a man hath done, then shall he begin." This exhortation anticipates every possibility, precludes every evasion. The times are critical, conditions have become sad. With more reason, therefore, pledge yourselves to become the light of the world and the salt of the earth. "But do thou be watchful in all things,

bear with tribulation patiently—fulfill thy ministry.” Mindful that “If any man minister to me, him will my father (who is in heaven) honor,” let us be resolved not only to walk, but to run on the way of the apostolate. For this, God has called us. Let us pray for one another, that in holy concord and unity of spirit (strongly united “in bond of peace” in the Heart of Jesus Christ Crucified) we may be able to add the prizes of plans and triumphs to our blessed goal of Paradise.

#### SEMINARIANS

Dear Seminarians, you have already heard the sacred truths of religion regarding the Apostolate toward which you are directing your steps in the ecclesiastical seminary. It remains for me in the place of God and in His adorable Name to direct but one appeal to your souls. “Young men,” says the Apostle, “in like manner, exhort that they be sober.” Sobriety is, then, especially prescribed for you, besides being enjoined upon all. My brothers, “be sober and watch.” Sobriety implies the mortification of our various desires, our perverse inclinations, and our excessive appetites which try to rule the human heart. The enemy, who is the adversary of the good, vexes youth in particular, and especially ecclesiastical youths, that the mystical seedlings may not strike deep roots of lasting virtue, or at least not sufficiently deep. The enemy would have them grow as plants not trained erect at the proper time, so that they become twisted and gnarled as they grow. Watch, there-

fore, for the outward attacks with which the tempter tries to entrap you. Be careful for his inferior attacks. Watch over the observance of your Rules, which furnish your weapon of defence. Watch, finally, in most fervent prayer with God in self-reform most edifying to your neighbor, that, though youths in age, you may be spiritually mature in virtue: the understanding of a man is grey hairs . . . in whom there is . . . the knowledge of God. Nor quit praying for the Community which has received you, which educates you in the sanctuary and temple of God, and guides your steps for the good of your souls, and the expectation of the Church.

#### BROTHERS

That the spiritual doctrines which will be explained to you in the course of the Retreat bear fruit, receive them, best beloved, in Jesus Christ with these dispositions: 1) as coming from God, Who thereby speaks to the heart; 2) as acts of charity on the part of the Community to your souls; 3) as means directed of His glory that you are serving. Take glory, therefore, in your title of “Brother Servants,” a title which religion ennobles and uplifts, which holiness enlivens and promotes, and which humility especially guards and perfects. You serve God Himself in serving His works. Never believe that doing external and earthly work is a hindrance to the good of your soul. There is no family or community, not even the most rigorously contemplative, where there is no call for this kind of work. Only deter-

mine that you yourselves will not become the cause of your own spiritual loss. Learn from Jesus Christ, Who during His private life, especially while subjecting Himself to His Blessed Mother Mary and St. Joseph, served them in manual labor. He teaches us that external and temporal works, when they are not separated from the life of the spirit, ground the soul not only in humility, but in patience, charity, and meekness. He shows us how they can raise the heart aloft to desires of heavenly things. When about your duties, therefore, think of God, in Whose immensity we have our being. Think of obedience, which sanctifies the entire man. Think of the good example which you thereby promote. Make every thought of sadness and sloth be far away from you. Serve God, and serve Him in cheerfulness. For His love shows the joy of the just, even in external works. Shine forth the modesty which should be the fruit of an internal purity of the soul: "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice. Let your moderation be known to all men."

## *Fifth Letter*

*"The king brought me into the cellar of wine; he set in order charity in me."*

On the occasion of this holy retreat, let us retire into the Sacred Heart of Jesus which is the Center of peace, the Furnace of love, the Ark of safety, and the mystical Wine-cellar. Our purpose will be to

raise our soul to that height of virtue through which we become dear to God and pleasing to men—"beloved of God and men." The need we have of spiritually profiting from the good, the twofold spirit we must acquire for the reform of ourselves and others, the particular and general wants of the Church—how do these not furnish us with special incentives to profit from the Word of God during these days. "The king brought me in." It is Christ Jesus Who brings us into the aforesaid cellar to accomplish wonderful and surprising things in us. He assumes the title of king to signify the magnificence of His gifts and the extent of His infinite power, and at the same time, He wishes to show us His most tender love by which He leads us into this asylum of peace. He will make us rich in merits and virtues, if we only respond to grace.

Let us picture for ourselves a cellar. Here we see the method whereby we may receive and cherish His heavenly favors through the most intimate recollection in prayer. Let us be guided in our advance, that in this cellar the most loving Lord may serve us with substantial food and drink. His nourishment will renovate our heart and fortify our soul unto salutary works for life eternal.

Now, our soul may find itself in three states: the first is sloth, the second is despair, and the third is a need of greater fervor and energy in working for God's glory. Take the example of three companions journeying toward a certain city. Let us imagine that one of them faints on

account of illness. The second, although strong, finds himself exhausted by the fatigue of the journey. The third, though robust, feels the need of nourishment to sustain himself and to keep active the powers of the body, so as to be able to complete the journey. Who can fail to see at once the necessary means he would have used to sustain each of these three companions?

Venerable brothers, let us apply the example to ourselves. Let us examine it in a spirit of profound humility before the adorable throne of the mercy of Jesus Christ, which is the Cross. Let us retire into the cellar of His divine Heart, as was proposed at the outset, and speak to the divine Redeemer in this manner: "Observe, O Lord, the languor which the infirmities of our spirit have occasioned in us; we need a cure, and we already know that Thou through the prophet assurest us that Thou art willing to heal our maladies." "Who healeth all thy diseases."

First there is needed some of that mystical wine of sorrow, which takes away languor itself and invigorates our soul anew. "Thou has made us drink the wine of sorrow." Hence, when repentant and contrite resignation dictates to our conscience, we find ourselves on the road which leads to Paradise. How does this not help us to hope! What urgent need do we not experience for that heavenly bread and mystical wine of holy and divine love to remove the despair into which we could easily fall, were it not for Thee, O Lord, Who hast propitiously nourished us. It is such

nourishment which causes hilarity and arouses courage to follow the road to the mountain of perfection. "Bread," the Psalmist therefore said, "strengthens man's heart, and wine cheers the heart of man." Yet the nearer approaches our dear home, heaven, the more necessary it is to grow strong in merit and rich in works before God. It is on this account that the beloved Lord preserves special drinks of the choicest wine for us, such as is spoken of in the Canticle: "A cluster of cypress my love is to me." Intemperance in drink is forbidden to man, but in the spiritual order, blessed is he who is inebriated with holy and celestial love, symbolized by the choicest wines of the vineyards of Engaddi.

Those wines require, however, that the soul cultivate the mystical vineyard of the heart, and that just such vines be grown as will yield them. The divine Husbandman is Jesus. As for the rest, we must let ourselves be nourished by Him, while cooperating with the designs of His Divine Providence. How will not the word then be verified in each and all of us: "The vines in flower yield their sweet smell." Attracted by this fragrance, the people shall come to receive seasonable nourishment. For this reason it will be proper to keep the hedge well trimmed, so that while helping others, our mystical vineyard may not be trampled under foot and its produce abused. The wine-cellar is fitted with a press to squeeze out the juice of the grapes to obtain from them those precious drinks which we have been speaking

of till now. Indeed, was not the Heart of Jesus, typified by the wine-cellar, put under the press of most cruel suffering? And does not all the profit which comes from His suffering flow from there into our souls? "I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the Gentiles there is not a man with me."

Dearest in Jesus Christ, it is time for us to give over the vineyard of our soul to cultivation, to toil willingly under the pressure of present trials. The love of Jesus, represented by the wine, will take away our sloth, will provide against our despair, will give us strength and will comfort our journey to our dear home in heaven, where we shall rejoice triumphantly without end. Let such sentiments be impressed upon the mind and the heart of everyone of us. Let the image of the cellar recall to us the fulfillment of our obligations by corresponding to a God most lavish with His gifts. With our thoughts concentrated for a most accurate examination of ourselves, may He animate us for the cure of our spiritual maladies. May He make us aim at the sublimest degree of sanctity. Since the King of Glory has brought us here into this cellar, let us in time establish here our own sweet abode. And let us re-enforce the basis of the holy city of God by the bonds of charity. Let us remember that the nuptial bed of the pacific King is the Cross; and that our souls upon this nuptial bed yearn for the most tender embraces of affection towards Jesus, Who hath redeemed us through love, Who in love hath

shed all His Blood, and through Whom we have our mystical dwelling in His Heart. "The king brought me in." Blessing and thanksgiving be evermore to Jesus, Who with His Blood has saved us.

## *Sixth Letter*

*May the grace and love of our Lord Jesus Christ be ever with us.*

Behold, venerable brothers, already the time of the holy spiritual retreat is at hand. "The time of visitation has arrived," and surely every one of us will repeat these words with sentiments of gratitude: "Lo, I have gone far off flying away; and I abide in the wilderness." We should, likewise, place before ourselves during the meditations of these days other matter. Let us recall this briefly.

The first duty to which the Most High calls us is contemplating His immense goodness in having chosen us as instruments of His glory and having raised us to the heavenly and divine ministry: "I admonish thee," says the Apostle to each of us, "to stir up the grace of God which is in thee by the laying on of my hands." Let us exhibit ourselves as the ministers of God . . . [for he] hath called us with a holy calling." From this we may see how noble and dignified our way of living must be, mindful of what the Prophet says, namely, that the mystical mountains of holiness constitute the basis upon which rests Sion the beloved: "The foun-

dations thereof are in the holy mountains." These mountains are the apostolic men by whom souls are led to sublime sanctity and therefore to the mystical doors of Sion, which is eternal salvation bound up with the holiness of our ministries—"The Lord loveth the gates of Sion." This mystic city, then, about which grand things are predicted, is the soul of an ecclesiastic devoted to the care of souls: "Glorious things are said of thee, O city of God." "A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden." In this city the just have their spiritual habitation and with spiritual joy every one longs to profit from the great benefits which God holds out to him: "The dwelling in thee is as it were of all rejoicing." What great motive is not this for our constant and serious consideration!

A second reflection which must engage us during our silence and recollection are the needs of this most disastrous age in which we are living. Ungrateful beyond comparison must be the one who does not feel it his obligation to serve the honor and glory of Jesus Christ. It is astonishing how the Divine Majesty is daily belittled by most men, how His law is being trampled under foot, the holy name of the Lord profaned, and how the inestimable price of our redemption is disregarded. How deep is the darkness which fills human minds in consequence of the sins of men! How they rage against the sanctuary and seek to overthrow good order, taking away that peace which can be found only in God! And we who must throw up a ram-

part against a torrent of vice, and and be a wall of defence to the house of the Lord—how necessary it is for us to exclaim with the Prophet: "Strengthen me with a perfect spirit." But where is this twofold spirit principally to be acquired if not in the retirement of the holy spiritual retreat? But since the Lord makes use of humble souls for the grand works of His glory, and in order to come into special communion with God, let us this year resolve upon an ever more perfect acquisition of the virtue of holy humility. May this virtue be the governor of our thoughts, affections, words, and deeds that we may again find favor in the eyes of God. Did not the Savior once say to the Apostles: "I send you forth as lambs in the midst of wolves?" Did He not humble Himself for the love of men unto death on the Cross? "He humbled Himself, becoming obedient to death, even to death on a cross." As the humble shepherd Moses made himself dreaded in Egypt by means of his miraculous rod, this practice of humility will make the evangelical worker who is furnished with the mystical rod of the Cross (because he is humble) become terrible to the demon.

The foundation of all holiness is a humble life from which spring fraternal charity, docility in obedience, and above all, assiduous prayer before the throne of Divine Mercy to obtain greater graces, courage, and strength for the priesthood. Let this thought, then be an incentive to labor with more energy. Let it be

our salutary thought during life, the end of which is ever drawing nearer. "For . . . the sufferings of the present are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that will be revealed in us," "For our present light affliction, which is for the moment, perhaps for us an eternal weight of glory that is beyond all measure." Let also the thought that we are attached to a community which offers such broad opportunity for laying up treasures in Heaven during the short span of our life animate us to run the apostolic course with bold and swift steps. Our days will then be rendered full of virtues and merits: "Full days shall be found in [us]."

#### SEMINARIANS

To this we shall append a special reflection for our seminarians. They must, in the main, practice that which refers to the priesthood, so that their growth in spiritual fervor may keep pace with their advance in years, with their application to the sciences, and with the desire of working for the glory of God and the edification of their neighbor. Let them reflect on the following analogy. Just as soldiers intent upon furnishing themselves with weapons and ammunition for battle can be said to be engaged in the service of their prince, so it is likewise the case of him who prepares for the service of the church by practicing himself in the handling of weapons necessary to fight the battles of the Lord. "He teacheth my hands to war," we shall say with the prophet, "and maketh my arms like a bow of brass."

#### BROTHERS

A reminder also for you, brothers, who help the Community by your work. It is recommended that you imitate the angels, who praise and bless God and at the same time act as custodians of the divine will in behalf of men. What do I wish to say by this? In what does their imitation consist for you? That you may know how to unite the active life with the life of contemplation. Always walk in the Divine Presence; aspire to God; immerse yourselves in Him as in an ocean of every good. Speak to Him in daily and frequent ejaculations. When serving the Community, remember that you serve God Himself. Most beloved, be angels in your manners, angels in the love of God, zealous for His honor. Know that while a cherub was placed by God in custody over the earthly paradise, so also does our sacred Community greatly depend upon you. The safe keeping of our houses, the inns of peace, the places of special sanctifications, and the sweet asylums for so many souls listening for the voice of God in seclusion is in your hands. For this reason, the observance of the rule, the silence to be kept, and the edification to be promoted must at all times form the safeguard and custody of whatever pertains to you. Finally, unite yourselves all again "in the bond of peace . . . into the love of God, and the patience of Christ," in the Adorable Heart of Jesus Christ. There ponder the words of the Apostle, "Christ . . . has loved us, and washed us . . . in His own blood." Let us implore an increase of fervor in the

devotion to the divine Blood, the price of our redemption, the medicine and laver of our souls, the comfort and balm of our hearts.

## *Seventh Letter*

*They shall be in the mountains like doves of the valleys. (Ezech. 7:16)*

Since we are called by God to the mystical mountain of perfection, which is proper to our state, our priesthood, and our relations to souls redeemed by the inestimable price of the Divine Blood, it will be profitable to reflect on the words quoted above: "They shall be in the mountains like doves of the valley." God surely wills that our conscience and life present that sincerity which the image of the dove offers us for consideration. Are we so before the Most High? Let us count the years of our life, the benefits we have received from the Lord, the good works we have promised, and how we have performed them. Let us see how urgent it is to cleanse our hearts, keeping in mind how necessary it is: "Wash yourselves, be clean." Remembering also that nothing unclean shall enter heaven, to what spotlessness must we not aspire! "Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

This one truth firm in our mind, let us give place to the consideration of what ascetic writers state in relation to the purgative way. The dove, indeed, coos more than the song bird

sings. Truly golden is that which Cardinal Bellarmine wrote in his work entitled "De Gemitu Columbae." Yes, dear brothers, let us bewail our faults, our defects: "My groaning is not hidden from thee." "My eyes have sent forth springs of water." "I roared with the groaning of my heart." Let us weep for the needs of the times and the sins of the people. "Between the porch and the altar, the priests, the Lord's ministers shall weep, and shall say: 'Spare, O Lord, spare thy people.'" Lastly, let us lament with feelings of love for Jesus, who says to us: "They shall look upon me . . . and they shall mourn." Such tears will not bring about excessive sadness, but will sprinkle the heart with that holy unction which animates and directs the works of eternal life.

The white dove is timid and watchful. When the hawk pursues her, she plunges into water. Similarly, the truly compunctious soul will adopt that new manner of life in which alertness and watchfulness are maintained. At the same time the fear of God makes her ready to flee every occasion of relapsing into sin. She imitates the white dove of Noe. In the mystical ark of the Divine Heart, she seeks that sweet mansion which constitutes a foretaste of Paradise from within, so that when the devil, the cruel hawk, lies in wait for her, she plunges nobly into the waters which gush forth from the fountains opened by the wounds of Jesus Christ. Coming into contact with those mystical waters of eternal life, she again finds comfort and peace, gathering new

strength to conquer and rout our common tempter.

To make the means proportionate to the end, therefore, the soul must place before herself the golden doctrine regarding the illuminative way. As the dove is without gall, so the soul strives to imitate it by unceasing mortification of the passions, which are typified by the gall. Even in the smallest things the soul tries to be directed in a way that makes humility, patience, meekness, love, and all the other holy virtues habitual. She thus acquires the fruits that are worthy to be offered up to the heavenly Husbandman: "Let my beloved come . . . and eat the fruit of his apple trees." As the eyes of the dove are open and clear, so also will our intellectual vision of God and of heavenly things become open and clear. With a pure intention we shall seek nothing but His glory and the true good of souls: "If thy eye be sound, thy whole body shall be full of light." It is then that the Lord, transported in His love and compassion, exclaims: "Thy eyes are doves' eyes."

These very reflections — these truths — dear brothers, enable us to draw abundant fruit from our retreat and to acquire thoroughly the science of the saints, the center of our heart's desires. And the virtue which is acquired is rendered most pleasing to our heart. Whoever looks to righteousness is disgusted with whatever leads away from God. He thirsts only after God, for on the illuminative way he is continually full of desires and is ever thirsting

after God Himself. Likewise doves are ordinarily seen on "brooks of waters." So let our life's sojourn be near the fountains of eternal life. And as the hart follows the course of the beloved brook to quench its thirst, so let us thirst after our dearest Lord: "As the hart panteth after the fountains of water; so my soul panteth after thee, O God." It is the Lord who says to us, "All you that thirst, come to the waters." Whosoever drinks of these waters "shall never thirst." On the other hand, the dove also spreads out her wings to fly. So we also, advancing in virtue and in the desire for perfection, should seek to fly to the throne of the Lord. This indicates the perfection which one must acquire by degrees: "He will give me wings?" God answers us: "imitate the dove and spread out your lighted wings."

Such is the sweet joy of the priesthood. What a mine of gold it procures for us to treasure up riches in heaven! Behold the triumphs of holiness which are a consequence of living upon the mystical mountains of the sanctuary as we imitate the qualities of the dove: "They shall be in the mountains like doves in the valleys." Finally, let humility be not only the basis and support of every good work and holy affection, but let it also be the custodian of the merits which are acquired by divine grace. Let it be our guide, our counselor, our teacher. May it lead us to the knowledge of our duties and our failings. May it guide us by the hand to the fulfillment of all that God

requires of us. Let humility comfort charity. Let it animate the union of hearts in the Adorable Heart of Jesus Christ and make us one day the partakers of His most blessed reign in heaven.

## *Eighth Letter*

To prepare you for the spiritual exercises, I am pleased to use those important words which we should often recall during the course of the Church year. They will awake us from any laxity into which our hearts might have fallen and will lead us to whole-hearted and fervent resolutions. These are the sentiments which God places before us: "Thy Saints, O Lord, have passed a wonderful way, serving Thy commandments, that they might be found unhurt in the midst of the mighty waters." Let us therefore meditate on these words.

We are called to sanctity: "For this is the will of God, your sanctification." To sanctity willed by God, inculcated by the Church, and expected by the people. To sanctity which begets order, reforms man, and attunes him for the good, and places him in the midst of true and lasting happiness in God. For what other purpose are we in this valley of tears if not to shine as the light and to prepare ourselves in this way for our dear home in heaven? Let not only this representation of general principles be impressed upon us, but also the concept of those

particular reflections which have a special bearing on our state of life. Not merely through a common life of virtue, but through a wonderful way does God Himself deign to lead our souls: "We have passed a wonderful way, "that is, the way of separation from our parents and from our parents and from whatever object that might hinder us, not to mention the spiritual death to ourselves, that we might serve the the divine commandments: "Serving Thy commandments." Are not these same commandments great proofs of God's adorable Providence? Did He not promise us a hundredfold and life eternal? "And everyone who has left house or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall possess life everlasting." "They have passed a wonderful way." Blessed is he who keeps this well in mind and lives only for God. Thereby the meaning of the following words will be confirmed: "Thy Saints, O Lord, have passed a wonderful way, serving Thy commandments, that they might be found unhurt in the midst of the mighty waters."

Here, then, lies the matter for our self-examination during the retreat: the exercise of a most profound humility, the sincerest gratitude, and a most noble courage in thinking of the time spent in tepidity and faint-heartedness, the gathering of new strength not only to walk, but to run in the way pointed out to us by the Lord. In this manner we can free

ourselves from a sway that is harmful to our souls.

Only one glance at Jesus is needed. With the staff of the Cross He has opened for us a path in this pitiable sea of the world. In that path we may remain free and safe from any flood or storm: "That we might be found unhurt in the midst of the mighty waters." As the Lord never fails to support every creature in its need, so He offers us the Red Sea, a symbol and type of the Mysteries of His Precious Blood. By this Blood we provide for our welfare. The mystical soil of souls, arid because of the sins of men, is cultivated and watered. A way is prepared for the sinner by which he may go out of Egypt, the image of this wicked and desert-like world. To the penitent, and the more so to souls burning with love for Jesus, a spur and incentive is given to be shipwrecked in this mystic sea. Thus is spelled out the victory of the Divine Redeemer: "Dry land appeared and out of the Red Sea, a way without impediment." How many truths are contained in these few words! Jesus the Savior ardently desires to remind us to be recollected during the retreat and to read the great book of the Cross that we may acquire heavenly wisdom for the sanctification of ourselves and others. But what shall we read in the wounds of Jesus Crucified if not this, that Christ is the mystic rock struck with the staff of the Cross: "He struck the rock, and the waters rushed forth, and the streams overflowed." Through the Cross we enjoy the abundance of those mystic

waters, which symbolize the graces issuing from the merits of the Divine Blood. We are enabled to promote purity of life in ourselves and virtue in our neighbor. Let us listen to the touching voice of the Savior, Who exhibits His sufferings to us as an incentive to zeal for souls. They are purchased by the inestimable price of our redemption: "For you have been bought at a great price."

The apostolic labors, the perseverance in the duties of the priesthood, and the suffering in defense of the work of salvation (rather than being depressed) should stimulate us to imitate our Divine Master and Exemplar. In this manner "we have passed a wonderful way." In us shall be verified the meaning of these words: "Though the elect be punished in the sight of men, yet is their hope full of immortality forever." What a sweet consolation to be able to thus spend our life as a worthy sacrifice for the greater honor of God and for the welfare of souls! What an interesting, what a glorious career the Most High proffers us! And what a laurel, what crowns in reward for it! "Therefore, they have earned crowns of victory."

For this end let us pray. Waxing strong in brotherly love, let us endeavor to understand more and more the purpose for which God has united us: namely, to be a mutual help in the spirit of fervor and science, in the work of the priesthood, in the wielding of the mystic arms of the spirit, and no less in the means incidental to this end: "Because of the covenant of the Lord, and the laws of

their fathers, the Saints of God abode in brotherly love, for one spirit and one faith was ever in them." Blessed, then, are those who, in accordance with their calling, live in the house of the Lord either by preparing for the priesthood, as our seminarians, or by actually working as priests, or by participating in these respective fields, as do the lay brothers. "Blessed are they," I say, "that dwell in Thy house, O Lord; they shall praise Thee for ever and ever."

In conclusion, it is something holy and delightful to live united in charity for the motives indicated: "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." It is "good" for our mortification, and "pleasant" for the glories of the priesthood. Let there be, therefore, oneness in spirit and harmony of will in all things, so that, well-founded on the mystic rock of the Cross, we may repel the darts which hell aims at us. Let us work out a noble crown for the beloved Sion.

## *Nineth Letter*

*May the grace and love of Jesus Christ be always in our hearts.*

"Take heed to thyself . . . be diligent in reading, in exhortation, and in teaching. Do not neglect the grace that is in thee." My most beloved, these are the memorable words whereby God calls us to the spiritual exercises. Although with the grace of God we constantly apply these words to the aim and object of our

holy priesthood, nevertheless we must also make use of spiritual means to be able to better persevere in good works and to promote the glory of God with greater fervor. It cannot be denied that the exterior life, to be regulated and maintained, requires the cultivation of the interior life. The resulting zeal and fire of charity or the welfare of souls will be in proportion to our firm insistence upon this training. Hence, the Apostle says to everyone: "Take heed to thyself . . . for in doing this thou will save both thyself and those that hear thee."

What would happen to us, if, while dispensing the mysteries of holy religion to others, we would not make due and continuous application of them to ourselves? What would so much good avail us if our apostolate would not be animated and directed by a true spirit of God? May the following words never justly be said of us: "The whole night we have toiled and have taken nothing."

The years are passing and the fleeting time, which never returns, brings us to eternity. Let everyone therefore say to himself: "Why are thou fast asleep? Rise up, call upon thy God." "Physician, cure thyself."

Who are the staunch and fearless workers of whom the Apostle speaks? They are those who act in a true spirit of the Lord and show themselves true ministers of the sanctuary: "Let us exhibit ourselves as the ministers of God." "Whoever are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God." "The older I be-

come," said Saint Vincent de Paul, "the more I know what a missionary should be. He is a man sent by God 'to give knowledge of salvation to his people.' " He is a visible angel sent to the people to bring divine messages. He is the mystic trumpet of the Lord through which He calls the erring to repentance, encourages those already converted, and raises the just to greater sanctity: "Lift up thy voice like a trumpet."

What is a missionary? He is a man who, spiritually dead to everything which could hinder the purpose of the ministry and his holy vocation, lives in union with God and for His glory alone. He is a man who nourishes himself with no other food than with the heavenly food to which the sacred text refers: "My food is to do the will of Him who sent me." He thirsts after justice and sanctity: "Blessed are they who hunger for justice." His heart, animated by the heavenly fire of the love of God, is pierced and moved in seeing that men do not love God: "Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I am not inflamed?"

That we might renew within us the fervor of that life which substantiates what Jesus once said to His apostles: "You shall be witnesses for me," we ought to examine ourselves on the things thus far expounded. By this examination we will realize how our Community provides us with those means through which we are to cultivate a more and more vigorous virtue: withdrawal from the world, recollection, silence, examination of conscience, and the

Rule. How do they not influence the strengthening of the spirit and the progress to be made in ecclesiastical perfection! "They [the saints] shall renew their strength. They shall take wings as eagles. They shall fly and not faint." Upon this internal cultivation of the spirit depends the external life of the Priesthood. We shall be ordained to perform duties towards God, towards our Community, and towards our neighbor. In the case of everyone shall be verified the words of the Lord about the man who always seeks to advance and mature in holiness: "In his heart he hath disposed to ascend by the steps in the vale of tears and in the place which he hath set."

May we diligently keep these few sentiments in our hearts and let them be deeply imprinted there. Let us imitate the Blessed Virgin Mary, who cherished the words of our Blessed Savior, even though she was the very mirror of sanctity: "Mary kept in her mind all these things, pondering them in her heart." May our good Mother be our guide and teacher, our prototype and model of Jesus. In a spirit of deep humility let us listen to, and cherish, those teachings of God which are given in the sacred passages quoted above. May our hearts be filled with those holy desires which effect a most intimate union with the Highest Good. May He always direct our tongue in announcing the eternal truths to the people: "O Lord, thou wilt open my lips." "My heart hath uttered a good word." May then our lips be closed for this reason: "I will hear what

the Lord God will speak in me; for He will speak peace unto his people."

#### SEMINARIANS

Already at the announcement of the retreat, you heard the voice of God in your hearts. As you prepare for the priesthood, remember the great obligations you will receive. Prepare yourselves, therefore, by a serious consideration of sacred things. Acquire solid virtue and cultivate the sacred sciences, that you may become the light of the world and the salt of the earth. Imitate Jesus in His private life. In this regard, examine yourselves especially during these days: "That the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodily frame." Consecrate the first fruits of your career to God, and as long as you remain as lilies in the garden of the Church, the most loving Jesus shall always fill you more and more with rich blessings. You should ask with deep humility for these things, particularly during retreat. Strongly practice purity of intention in every action. Put a high degree of charity into every work, so that you may become true children of light. "Walk while you have the light, that darkness may not overtake you."

#### BROTHERS

United as you are in Jesus Christ during the retreat, my dear Brothers, remember those inspirations whereby the all-provident God called you to our holy Community. Examine yourselves on your cooperation, your practice of virtue, and your use of the God-given means for your sanctification. Remember that when

you serve the Community, you are helping in a work which is God's. The care and zeal that must be yours in fulfilling the obligations which the Lord has entrusted to you may be easily seen. Do not blame others for your failings, but rather your own lack of more virtue. You shall acquire it during this retreat, however, with the grace of God. May the Lord "satisfy your desire with holy things" that if you are holy during time, you shall be triumphant in eternity.

### *Tenth Letter*

To follow the usual means of aiding one another to a renewed fervor in virtue, let us limit ourselves to a few short reflections proposed here as a help to a more perfect training in our holy vocation. I do not deny that the spiritual sentiments which we now briefly call to mind may have been presented to us on some former occasion. However, a closer and more intense examination of these rays of divine light will necessarily impress them more deeply upon us and make them more clearly understood: "The declaration of thy words giveth light and understanding to little ones." The three points which must be made the primary object of meditation this year are: first, a fuller understanding of the sublime vocation for which God has chosen us; second, the good use of the obvious means for the attainment of our end; third, the obstacles which the evil spirit places in our

way and which not only retard our spiritual progress, but likewise thwart our ministry of furthering the grand objects of divine glory.

In regard to the first, we should devote ourselves to the consideration of the question which the Mellifluous Doctor proposed to each and every one of his monks: "Ad quid venisti?" Yes, let each of us ponder on these words, and so better inform ourselves of the purpose of our being in the Community. A true detachment from all things, self-conquest, and consequently the eradication of inordinate inclinations are, without doubt, prerequisites for the well-regulated, disinterested, and holy work which God has entrusted to us. Every human attachment lessens our good work, alters its degree of merit, and is a great hindrance to its perfection: "I feared all my works," explains Job. St. John of the Cross, that great master of spiritual life, illustrates this point by means of the following analogy: The hunter who has just a very fine thread attached to a bird will readily hamper its passage through the air. In like manner the attachments of the soul, no matter how insignificant the ties may be, inevitably hamper its mystic flight to God. It is not sufficient, therefore, that I merely do something good, but I must likewise be actuated by that spirit of the Lord which animates, directs, and raises this good to the greater glory of God: "For whoever are led by the spirit of God they are the sons of God."

How blessed are we, if a prompt

fulfillment of the Divine Will serves as the mystical food to nourish and strengthen our souls: "My food is to do the will of Him Who sent me." What, then, let me ask, is a missionary? He is one that has received the call from Our Lord "to give knowledge of salvation to his people." He is extraordinary minister who offers means, both now and beyond the ordinary, for the sanctification of the people. Since such a sublime career demands an eminent degree of virtue, the laity instinctively expect and demand it from us.

Since we are all aware that the ministry is branching out into so many various fields of operation, can anyone fail to understand that this fact should also be a strong incentive to an irreproachable life? Profound humility, ardent charity, and patience, indomitable amidst suffering and mystically alive with virtuous acts—these are the essential endowments and indispensable ornaments for our own salvation and that of others. "The Lord greatly desired the daughter of Jerusalem, adorned with her jewels." Observe that the soul consecrated to God is compared to a valiant woman, which is verified in the moral application of the text: "She hath put out her hand to strong things, and her fingers have taken hold of the spindle." The hand is disposed for work.

Steady and painstaking fortitude shown in our work will make us acceptable to the heavenly Spouse, who, out of love for us, advises us to weave a choice garment that is to season sanctity both in ourselves and

in others with the sweetness of labor. This valiant woman with her texture of the choicest silk (an allusion to her various virtues) will be able to present a most precious garb and thus bear witness to the words: "She has made for herself clothing of tapestry: fine linen and purple is her covering—and she shall laugh in the latter day." What wonder, then, if she be acclaimed in eulogy: "They called her blessed."

My beloved in Christ, let us with true sincerity reflect on these truths and deeply imbibe their meaning, so as to renew ourselves in that spirit to which God is constantly calling us. Let us often repeat the words of the prophet: "Renew a right spirit within by bowels." And in the remaining days of our pilgrimage here below, let us have continuous intercourse with the Lord, so that "full days may be found in us."

But it will not suffice merely to lay open to our minds and hearts the purposes of Divine Providence regarding us, but we must likewise consider the most suitable means by which we ought to cooperate with the divine grace for the attainment of our end. There are three principal means from which the woman drew the assurance of her merit: first, the love of retirement; second, constancy in prayer; third, untiring zeal for work. Thus an apostolic man, a soul consecrated to God, must be desirous of separation from the world. Here he holds intercourse with the Divine master in a particular manner, in order thus to prepare himself for the external work of the priesthood.

A missionary must be a mystic in his room, a farmer in the field. Let us unite the interior life with the exterior and live in union with God. The interior life is the basis upon which the exterior life builds. Lack of interior life deprives the edifice of its foundation. If the foundation is not firm, the external edifice can not be erected in accordance with the Divine Will. Prayer, moreover, directs the erection of this edifice, lends vigor to its designs, animation in its execution, and finally singles out those ornaments that will excite the admiration of the people for the masterpiece of God: "Come and behold ye the works of the Lord."

In such a spiritual edifice the souls entrusted to our care should be induced to make their mystical abode. With the help of God they will then find a cure in sickness, strength in weakness, and courage in faint-heartedness. This mystical home will be to them a protection, defence, and sanctification. But there will not be lacking those who resist the Divine Mercy. To overcome this resistance, a zeal, untiring in work, unflinching in trials, always spirited in the sacred functions, must make us all to gain all for Christ. With reference to this, it is said of the valiant woman, "She has strengthened her arm . . . she has opened her mouth to wisdom, and has not eaten her bread idle." And therefore, happy are we if prompted by Christ's love, we allow these sentiments to mature into strong resolutions. Just as a soldier who is well-trained will advance cautiously upon the enemy to dis-

cover their ambush and eventually bring them under control and triumph over them, so also must we conduct ourselves in the apostolate which has been entrusted to us, mindful of the words of the apostle to his beloved disciple: "Conduct thyself in work as a good soldier of Christ Jesus."

In applying the means which I have just proposed—means that furnish us with those weapons of light which we should constantly employ against the infernal host—we will not lack temptations of fear, reluctance, sloth, or anger. They will disturb our spirit to blind us to the importance of the priesthood, to withhold from us whatever is conducive to its success, and to discourage us in the face of opposition. But let us be united in our endeavor to conquer the flatteries and deceptions of the tempter, "lest at any time my enemy say: I have prevailed against him." Since the demon is incessantly bent upon defeating every good work, how many efforts will he not make towards hindering the great work of our apostolate? On the other hand, let us always keep in mind: "I can do all things in him who strengthens me." "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" With the mystic staff of divine grace well cultivated by us, let us overcome the haughtiness of the enemy, as the staff of Moses once humbled the pride of Pharaoh. In grasping this staff we will find support, encouragement, and assistance in our trials. "Thy rod and thy staff, they have comforted me."

Now that we have communicated and applied these important spiritual thoughts in the bond of charity to ourselves, let us carry them out immediately. May they serve as the mysterious seals which, to use a Scriptural phrase, diligently close the doors of our hearts to the enemy of good works. May they bring us that peace of heart which constitutes a foretaste of Paradise. And thus, serving God with a prompt spirit, we most ardently desire to possess Him for all eternity.

#### SEMINARIANS

On you, my dearest seminarians, God has impressed a special mark of His benevolence. You are the new plantation of the Community. On you are centered our untiring care, so that as you advance in years, you may also make progress in virtue and spiritual fervor. But what means shall you employ for accomplishing your goal? The virtue of holy obedience must be your chief asset. You must examine yourself on this virtue. "An obedient man shall speak of victory." Obedience is that mystical beacon whose light points out the road of eternal salvation to you. It uncovers the snares of the enemy, gives you security in your work, sets your mind and heart at rest, and calls into practice the other virtues that crown us with merit for our heavenly Fatherland. Lastly, it will make you true disciples of Jesus, the model of perfect obedience, who "became obedient unto death." Not at all by our own ideas, nor by vanity (which may easily infect us), nor by false principles (which might readily

dominate us),—not by these should we regulate our lives and rule our passions, but by the true spirit of the Gospel and the exemplary conduct of the saints. These interior sentiments are prompted by religion and should be the mainstay of our behavior, good example, and preparation for the priesthood. This advice will be especially useful also to the brothers, since it is likewise adaptable to them. May the peace and love of Jesus Christ always be in our hearts.

## *Eleventh Letter*

Dearest brothers, in the past years God has given us most salutary truths as nourishment for our souls. He has given us the wholesome food of his heavenly and divine words, so that we may walk in the way of holiness with strength. Let everyone examine himself in the presence of God as to what has been his response to these divine favors. Again the happy period has come during which we are called by our most loving God to look over the record book of our conscience. We must examine ourselves diligently and zealously on the use we have made of the graces, talents, and time which God has so far accorded us to lay up treasures for heaven. May it never happen that we become like the idle servant who buried his talent, like the steward, wasteful of the goods of his lord, or the foolish virgins who carried empty lamps. Hearing the memorable words: "Lest perhaps, after preaching to others, I myself should become

rejected." what, then, should we, who are so miserable in the sight of God, say? Well may each one exclaim with the prophet: "I am the man that sees my poverty." May our holy Mother the Church pray that fearless workers rise to meet the needs of the time, and wage war against vice and sin with the mystic weapons of the priesthood. Now especially during the present retreat God will teach us the use of these weapons: "He teacheth my hands to war."

These things, in particular, we shall propose to ourselves for consideration during these days. First, we shall examine ourselves in the light of the question which the Mellifluous Doctor was accustomed to ask his monks, "Ad quid venisti?" For what purpose are we in the Community? To cooperate with the great designs of Divine Providence in the sanctification of ourselves and others; to be united by the bond of charity in order to raise a bulwark against the sinfulness of the world, and to quench the thirst of Jesus for souls; to imitate more closely the life of Jesus Christ by detachment from our home, parents, worldly conveniences, and above all, from ourselves. How much all this contributes to our real good and to the glory of God! Hence, I am not in the Community to work in accordance with my own opinion, to cater to self-love even in things spiritual, to foster petty animosities, or to act according to my likes and dislikes. But I am in the Community to attend to the life of the soul, to offer myself for the glory of God with

a holy abandonment of knowing the divine will by this just dependence upon Him whom it is due.

The second point about which we shall have to examine ourselves is the religious affection which we must bear towards our Community and towards one another. We shall always act according to the spirit of the Lord: "Whoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." We shall act in a manner that we, too, may have stamped upon our hearts the saying of the great St. Francis Xavier: "May my hand be forgotten if I should forget thee, O Society of Jesus!" Let our love in that respect be most singular. Let it be generous, patient and longsuffering, prudent, and strong. May we apply to ourselves these noteworthy words: "But if anyone does not take care of his own, and especially of his household, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever." "But who are those of the house of God?" ask many holy interpreters of (the Scriptures). They are especially those who are called to the sanctuary, to the holy cloisters, to a more intimate union with the Lord. Now who does not know that upon the cultivation of those mystic plants depends the abundance of the fruits they will yield? The heavenly husbandman is pleased with them and expresses his delight. God grant that in the case of our Community may be verified these words: "The vines in flower yield their sweet smell." The vineyard, however, has its hedge, so that the foxes may not stealthily creep in to destroy the vineyard. Be-

hold, by way of comparison. is the Rule, which prescribes the retirement, silence, conduct with outsiders, prudence in our dealings, and a virtuous industry at work. For the cultivation of the vineyard there is needed skill, toil, vigilance, and fructifying rain. For the cultivation of our Community there is needed special graces. These must be obtained by prayer, by endeavor in devoting ourselves to the good, by system, and by vigilance in gathering the desired fruits. In admirable agreement with all this are our Prescriptions and Rules, which cannot be too highly recommended.

The third point, finally, is our activity in furthering those objects which tend towards the glory of the Lord. We seek their permanence through the works which our Community proposes, the means which it points out, and the practices which it presents. Here let the Apostle St. Paul speak. In his letters he reveals such a great ardor for the salvation of souls and for their constant perfection: "Through the gospel I have begotten you . . . I could wish to be anathema myself from Christ for the sake of my brethren." "Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble and I am not inflamed?" "For the love of Christ impels us." "I overflow with joy in all our troubles." Let us meditate on such sayings, venerable brothers. And that the sentiments expressed in this letter of counsel may produce the happy results intended by God, let us impress upon our minds some spiritual keepsakes which shall be sparks

to enflame our charity. First, the outward life, if not guided by, and based upon the inward life, will waste the physical strength of a worker. Nor will it render him irreproachable before God. Secondly, whoever loves concealment and a humble and lowly life safeguards the practice of virtue and preserves holy and divine love. A man will not permit a precious liquid to evaporate, ascetic writers are wont to say, but will use all care to preserve it. Thirdly, he stands close to evil who contents himself with the lesser good; he stands far from evil who always aspires to the greater good. Fourthly, it is the greatest misery to be rich in its intellectual gifts, in popular applause for eloquent speech and so forth, if virtue is not associated with these, and if everything is not considered in its relation to God. Fifthly, it is worldly language to speak well of oneself or evil of others. Sixthly, whoever lives in obedience conforms to the will of God, maintains peace of heart, and furthers the edification of his neighbors. Seventhly, the efficacious

means to obtain zeal in doing all that has been set forth is devotion to the Divine Blood. May it be the delight of our hearts.

#### SEMINARIANS

In the practice of virtue there are three different degrees. The first is that in which a person sometimes performs acts of virtue. The second is that in which he tries to exercise himself in such acts on every occasion. The third is that in which he aims at perfection in them. Let everyone examine himself in this regard.

#### BROTHERS

In order that a Brother may be a worthy son of the Community and fulfill his obligations well, let him remember these brief but significant words: "Speak little! Toil much! Support all!" These sentiments—especially addressed to the students and brothers will prove profitable for every member of our Community. May the grace, the peace, and the mercy of Jesus Christ always abound in our hearts.